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THE WORKS

Of the late REVEREND

Mr ROBERT RICCALTOUN,

Miniſter of the Goſpel at Hobkirk.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

NEVER BEFORE PRINTED.

VOLUME I.

CONTAINING

Eſſays on HUMAN NATURE,

AND

Eſſays on ſeveral of the Doctrines of REVELATION.

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CONTENTS.

E.S.H. 6-24-26

Pag.

Eſſays on HUMAN NATURE.

Eſſ. I. *Of Happineſs and Perfection in general, abſolute and limited,* 1

Eſſ. II. *Of the Human Conſtitution, and Capacity ariſing upon the proper improvement of it,* - 31

Eſſ. III. *Of Human Knowledge, its nature, extent, and uſe,* - 132

Eſſays on ſeveral of the Doctrines of REVELATION.

1. *Propriety,* - - - 163
2. *The Knowledge of God,* - 168
3. *Faith,* - - - 170
4. *Views of God,* - - 172
5. *The Original and Progreſs of Knowledge,* - - 174
6. *Noſce teipſum,* - - 178
7. *The Bible way of teaching compared with the Philoſophical,* - 190

8. *The*

Pag.

8. *The character of the Deity as Creator, and the ſtate of the creature ariſing from it,* - - 196
9. *Certain truths current in the world, which could never have entered but by Revelation, and the Creator's teſtimony,* - 203
10. *The Original State of Mankind,* 209
11. *The Character of Jeſus Chriſt,* 238
12. *The original ſtate of Mankind after the entrance of ſin,* - 255
13. *Abraham,* - - 291
14. *Imputation of Sin and Righteouſneſs,* 305
15. *Abraham's Covenant,* - 319
16. *Sacrifices and Prieſthood,* - 337
17. *The import of the word* God, 359
18. *The Propitiatory, or Mercy-Seat,* 370
19. *Reconciliation,* - - 373
20. *Regeneration, and Eternal Life,* 390
21. *The Spirit, and Inſpiration,* 405
22. *Heaven; or, The world of ſpirits,* 429
23. *The way to Eternal Life,* - 440

ERRATUM.

p. 46. *lin.* 13. *for* ſhould *read* may not

ESSAYS

ON

HUMAN NATURE.

ESSAY I.

Of Happineſs and Perfection in general, abſolute and limited.

HAPPINESS and PERFECTION are words of great ſignificancy: They are in every body's mouth, but underſtood by very few. Every man has ſome pretenſions to the latter, and profeſſes to be in purſuit of the former; and certainly is ſo: but ſuch different roads are taken, and theſe ſo wildly inconſiſtent, that one may with great certainty conclude, that moſt part know not what they are doing.

The world, both philoſophers and vulgar, ſeem to have been always agreed in the thing, however they differed in the expreſſion, that happineſs is ſomething

near the ſame with being pleaſed: and to be perfectly pleaſed, is, indeed, to be quite happy: and accordingly, what contributes to pleaſure of any kind, is univerſally called *good;* and what gives pain, or even abates the degree of pleaſure, goes under the name of *evil.*

But as it may happen, that men as well as children may be pleaſed with trifles; nay, may be ſo far miſtaken as to fancy evil to be good, and good evil; the enjoyment can continue no longer after the miſtake is diſcovered. It is likewiſe agreed, that pleaſure muſt have ſome ſolid and durable foundation, commenſurate at leaſt to the capacity and duration of the being who is to find his happineſs in it. A failure in either of theſe, muſt produce great abatements even in the preſent enjoyment, and in the end unavoidable miſery and diſtreſs.

Theſe are good generals; but when we come to look into the meaning of them, and apply them to practice, what a boundleſs wilderneſs are we left to wander in! What is good and what evil in the extent of the univerſe, or even ſo far as man is or may be concerned, how hard is it to ſay?

ſay? and yet how neceſſary to be thoroughly known? But even this is but a preliminary. The ſeveral objects which are the materials of pleaſure and pain, muſt be carefully weighed; and their ſeveral degrees of moment, one way or other, exactly adjuſted. The frame and conſtitution of man muſt be narrowly examined, his capacity, and powers thence ariſing, the relations he ſtands in to the various objects without him, the purpoſes theſe objects are fitted to anſwer, and how they are to be procured, and improved, for raiſing and maintaining the higheſt pleaſure, muſt all be thoroughly underſtood.

Is this a taſk for man? What ſtrength of underſtanding, what accuracy of judgement, what application and induſtry muſt be required to ſucceed but tolerably in it? Enough to diſcourage any ſober man from ſo much as attempting it; and the more ſo, that the moſt exalted geniuſes have been employed about it near ſix thouſand years, and, after all their reſearches, have left the world in greater uncertainty than, we have reaſon to believe, they were at firſt ſetting out.

But there is one ſingle conſideration

which greatly overbalances all diſcouragements; the neceſſity of the thing. Man is obviouſly ſo made, as not only to be ſuſceptible of pain and miſery, but to have his feelings very quick and ſtrong: his wants are ſo many, and his appetites and cravings ſo keen, that life itſelf becomes a burden to him if they are not gratified. They who believe that God is good, can never perſuade themſelves, that any conſtitution of his was framed on purpoſe to make a numerous order of creatures neceſſarily miſerable. They muſt ſuppoſe, that ſome how or other relief is provided, and ſuch relief as lies on a level with every capacity, if men are not wanting to themſelves; which they evidently are, if they do not carefully look after and improve all the helps and aſſiſtances laid to their hands.

It requires ſcarce any attention to ſatisfy one's ſelf thoroughly, that it is impoſſible for any one man to have the full enjoyment of all the objects or materials of pleaſure, ſcattered as they are through the univerſe; nay even of thoſe which lie next to our hands, it is but a ſmall pittance that can fall to any one's ſhare. Hence, it may be preſumed, philoſophers and wiſe men came all

to

to agree in the neceſſity of ſome one thing, which every man might at all times have free acceſs to, and which ſingly ſhould be able to afford him perfect pleaſure; and thereby compenſate the want, and even the loſs, of every other thing. A moſt neceſſary expedient, could they have put the world in poſſeſſion of it. But how unhappy they were in their gueſſes what this chief good, as they called it, ſhould be, appears abundantly, without further examination, from the endleſs variety of their opinions concerning it: of which a learned Roman is ſaid to have reckoned no fewer than two hundred and eighty-eight different ones; and I believe no wiſe man will much regret the loſs of the particulars.

The two moſt famed ſects of the old philoſophers ran into quite oppoſite extremes. The one, reaſoning juſtly from the abſtract nature of happineſs, concluded, that it muſt lie in ſomething which every man muſt have ſuch a perfect poſſeſſion of, that it ſhould not be in the power of any being whatſoever to deprive him of it; and thence were tempted, very unnaturally, to ſet off their wiſe or happy man as a ſort of independent ſelf-ſufficient being.

being. The worth of what they called *virtue*, and the ſelf-enjoyment ariſing from the reflection upon his own excellency and worth, made him, in their opinion, a match even for the gods, and far above every earthly power.

The other very juſtly concluded, that theſe ſort of flouriſhes were altogether chimerical, and ſuch as the human conſtitution could by no means admit of; and obſerving man to come into and go out of the world much in the ſame manner as other animals do, they took their meaſures almoſt as much too low, as the others did too high; and concluded, that his pleaſures muſt be much of the ſame kind, bounded at leaſt with the proſpects and enjoyments of a preſent life; and moſt of them went no further than thoſe ſenſual gratifications which the mere brute part of the creation poſſeſs in greater perfection.

Thoſe who attempted to ſteer a middle courſe, having no certain foundations to build on, found themſelves involved in inextricable difficulties, and ran into ſuch confuſion as obliged them in effect to quit the purſuit, and to reſolve all private happineſs

pineſs into the good of the public or community of which they were members. Neceſſity forced every man to hold himſelf content with his own ſhare: and the whole buſineſs of the beſt ſort of moraliſts has been, to find out expedients and colours for making men eaſy in that ſituation.

The moſt part, if not all of their miſtakes, may be juſtly imputed to their neglecting, or not being ſufficiently inſtructed, to diſtinguiſh between abſolute, independent, and every way perfect happineſs, and that which is limited, dependent, and reaching only to a certain degree; ſuch as the conſtitution and capacity of inferior beings will admit of; and the ſeveral meaſures and degrees of the latter, as they approach nearer to or are further removed from abſolute perfection. To the firſt, there is more neceſſary than the moſt exalted apprehenſions of the ſublimeſt philoſophers were ever able to reach. And under the laſt, it is evident there muſt be as many different degrees, as there are different orders of limited and dependent beings.

To

To take the meaſures of abſolutely perfect happineſs at the loweſt, it is evident there muſt be abſolutely perfect poſſeſſion and enjoyment of complete and abſolutely perfect good; that the matter, the poſſeſſion, and the enjoyment, muſt all be perfect, and abſolutely ſo, to make out a happineſs of this kind: the leaſt remiſſion or abatement in any of theſe, muſt produce a proportional diminution of happineſs, and bring it down ſo much below perfection.

It ſcarcely needs any reflection to aſſure one, that the matter of this kind of happineſs, or what raiſes and maintains the conſtant flow of pleaſure, ſatisfaction, and delight, wherein the very nature of happineſs lies, muſt be abſolutely perfect in every view; and therefore muſt be ſuch, as not only doth not admit, but moſt effectually excludes, every degree and every tendency toward evil, of what kind ſoever; ſuch as ſhall furniſh out, and actually maintain, in the higheſt degree, and with infallible certainty, complete finiſhed pleaſure, ſatisfaction, delight, and continue for ever to do ſo; and, at the ſame time, ſupport the happy being in the poſſeſſion and

and perfect exercise of all possible powers, equal, and always the same, without decrease, intermission, or end; as nothing can be more evident, than that a failure, the least failure, in any of these, would make a flaw in the enjoyment.

That there must be at the same time an absolutely perfect possession of this same perfect good, is as evident; and that cannot subsist without the absolute property of it, independent of, and altogether above the reach of, every other being: or, to use the Stoics phrase, The happy being must have it in himself; not in that precarious and loose manner they imagined their wise man possessed of virtue, but that it shall be as essential to, and inseparable from him, as his own being. In one word, himself must be the fund of his own happiness, and in the all-sufficient fulness of his own being, and the unbounded extent of his powers, it must lie.

But, after all, the whole of that pleasure which constitutes happiness, lies in the enjoyment. However perfect the object is, yet, if every thing that is pleasing and agreeable about it is not taken in, and improved

to the beſt advantage, ſo much of happineſs muſt be loſt: and from what was juſt now obſerved, it will be readily allowed there muſt be perfect *being*. The word is very common, but very general, and applied to every thing that is, or rather that we have any knowledge of. Every body thinks he knows the meaning of it; but when put upon explaining his conceptions, the moſt learned will find himſelf quite at a loſs; and that indeed he neither hath, nor can have, any proper conceptions of its true import and meaning. The truth is, all our conceptions are formed upon thoſe ſuperficial views we have of the appearances of things; that is, their ſenſible qualities, by which we come to all the knowledge we have of their exiſtence. But what this ſame exiſtence or being is, whether the ſame, or ſomething different, from what we call *ſubſtance*, and which is equally unknown to us, I apprehend we have no poſſible way, in our preſent ſtate at leaſt, of attaining any information. It appears evidently above the level of our capacities; and perhaps it is the prerogative of the perfect being alone, who is the ſole proprietor of it, to underſtand its nature.

There

There is another, and which is reckoned a more full and diſtinct conception, of what ſhould qualify any being for enjoyment, and which goes under the name of *life*. Some of its conſequences and effects are well and familiarly known by us; but when we come to look into the origin and cauſe of theſe, which is properly what we call *life*, we will find it juſt as much a ſecret to us as the other; known only, as it is fit it ſhould be, to him who has life in himſelf. But weak and low as our notions of *life* are, it is from theſe that the higheſt conceptions of *perfection* we are capable of, are formed. We have no other way of conceiving of things ſo much beyond our reach, than by applying to them what we know of ſimilar, or any how analogous, effects, and the powers we are thereby led to ſuppoſe neceſſary for their production, and removing, ſo far as we are able, every imperfection.

It is thus that, even under all the diſadvantages of our preſent condition, we are naturally led to conceive of life, and the powers of it, as including every thing neceſſary to make out a capacity for every enjoyment. In its loweſt degree, it ap-

pears to carry in it the power of perceiving the objects that fall within its obſervation; of which there muſt be an endleſs variety, according to the different meaſures of ſtrength and weakneſs: nor can the perfection of it be imagined, without the moſt thorough comprehenſive and inſtantaneous knowledge, and that in the moſt direct and intuitive manner, without any of thoſe round-about ways which we find ourſelves obliged to take, even with ſuch things as lie next to our hands.

From the ſame views of life we readily conclude, there muſt, in the perfection of it, be found a perfect taſte, reliſh, or what ſhall we call that pleaſurable perception, of the beauty, worth, and every excellency of the object; which muſt, in the ſame native and neceſſary manner, produce a ſuitable delight, complacency, and, reſting in the enjoyment, admitting no further inclination, nor any poſſibility of ſatiety.

The notion of life likewiſe neceſſarily implies in it certain active powers, in oppoſition to theſe maſſes of dead matter, which cannot ſo much as move themſelves, much leſs any other thing, until they are ſet agoing by ſomething elſe; and, even then,

then, are directed entirely as they are acted upon. When life then is conceived at the higheſt, that is, when in our way, all imperfection is removed, it leads us into the conception of a perfectly free, independent, and therefore unlimited, power; which obviouſly either ſuppoſes, or contains in it, every perfection and excellency; and which cannot ſubſiſt without ſecuring perfect and complete happineſs, founded in, and ariſing from, the moſt perfect ſelf-enjoyment.

This, it is evident, is a ſort of happineſs not made for man, nor any being whatſoever which is either limited and dependent, or has the materials for maintaining life and happineſs to ſeek from without itſelf; which, on the moſt curſory reflection, will be found to be the caſe of every creature whatſoever; and therefore, when we ſpeak of perfection in any of theſe inferior ſort of beings, it muſt be underſtood in a quite different ſenſe. In him who poſſeſſes being, and has life with all its powers as his abſolute property, it is abſolute and boundleſs, without any limitation or confinement. In all others, it is evidently relative, reſpecting

ſpecting either ſuch beings whoſe frame or conſtitution is inferior to theirs, or ſuch of the ſame ſpecies as fall ſhort of what their conſtitution might have admitted. And thus all of them, even the moſt perfect of their kind, are ſo limited and confined, that they can by no means go beyond the bounds nature has ſet them.

There are three very different ranks and orders of beings which fall under our obſervation; man, brutes, and vegetables. Theſe all have life attributed to them, but in very different ſenſes, and of quite different kinds. The laſt eſpecially is of ſo very low a nature, as that it can have no pretenſions to the name, but on a very remote analogy, founded on the reſemblance it bears to the loweſt vital functions in animals; preſerving their being, and promoting their growth, by taking in proper nouriſhment, and propagating by their ſeveral ſeeds.

Among animals, as the very loweſt of them are by their fabrick and make ſenſibly diſtinguiſhed from the moſt perfect of the vegetable kind, ſo there is ſomething peculiar to every ſpecies which diſtinguiſhes it

it from the reſt. The inhabitants of the air, earth, and water, thoſe above and under the earth, are each of them formed for their own way of living, and incapable of another: nay, among thoſe of the ſame element, there is a ſurpriſing diverſity; and what is life to one, is death to another.

Though many of theſe have excellencies and perfections in their kind, acuteneſs of ſenſe, ſtrength and agility, &c. much above what man can pretend to; yet what would make the perfecteſt brute quite happy, the higheſt enjoyments they are capable of, would make but very indifferent entertainment for a man. And as we have more than probable reaſon to believe, that there are numberleſs orders of beings above as well as below us, ſome of them perhaps lodged in more perfect bodies, and others quite diſengaged from matter; could we bring them under our obſervation, we would, no doubt, find the ſame diſproportionate enjoyments ſubſiſting among them.

This difference in the frame and make of the ſeveral orders of inferior beings, is what we call their nature or conſtitution; and which is palpably diſcernible in material

rial beings; where the different contexture of parts, and the manner in which they are put together, point out to us how they are to be accounted for, and how they are fitted for receiving the impreſſions, and anſwering the purpoſes, they appear deſigned for. The ſame holds pretty fully in ſuch beings as, though themſelves of a ſuperior nature, ſtand connected with organiſed material bodies, more or leſs perfect, and exert their operations in and by them. When we attempt to aſcend higher, our ideas and proper conceptions quite fail us; and yet we cannot help imagining there muſt be ſomething analogous to, and ſome way reſembling, this, which we likewiſe call their nature or conſtitution, though we know not how to make a diſtinct account of it.

And hence ariſes what we call the capacity of any ſort of being, the higheſt approach toward perfection their conſtitution will admit; or, which is the ſame thing, their fitneſs to take in and improve proper objects for the ſupport of their being, and the enjoyments of life, according to the different meaſures and degrees of thoſe vital powers which belong to that ſort of beings,

beings, and beyond which they cannot reach. And hence, as the moſt perfect vegetable, with all the care and culture that can be beſtowed on it, will never become an animal, nor a mere brute a man, we judge accordingly of their different capacities; but yet, by proper care and tending, one individual may be brought greatly to excel his fellows left in the wild ſtate of nature; and ſome kinds of animals more than others.

Of all beings known to us, the human conſtitution admits of the higheſt improvement. There ſeems to be much greater difference between man and man, than there is betwixt the moſt perfect brute and the moſt deſpicable inſect. Hence a ſtrange variety, or rather different degrees, of capacity, and thence of pleaſures and enjoyments. What quite pleaſes one claſs, appears childiſh and trifling, airy and notional, or perhaps quite unnatural, to another.

Hence the great difficulty and fallacy in judging what is natural, and what otherwiſe. Compare a child, or even an untaught man, with a great genius, cultivate and improved to the beſt advantage;

how immenſe the odds! and how like different ſpecies! And yet we cannot ſay the one is more natural or unnatural than the other; but that the one is purely natural, and the other acquired; not as plants and animals acquire their bulk and ſtature, but by a ſort of culture peculiar to the human conſtitution.

To fix then the true ſtandard of any inferior being's capacity, eſpecially that of man, in which we are moſt concerned, it muſt be perverſely wrong, under a pretext of following nature, to fix on any of the lower degrees of improvement: we muſt take it at the higheſt, that is, as high as the conſtitution will admit of; and therefore there will moſt frequently be found a very great odds between what pleaſes and what ſhould pleaſe, or what they call contentment and happineſs. The former may be found in the very loweſt meaſures of improvement, and perhaps even in wild nature; and when it reſts there, is ſo far from being a virtue, that it is really the moſt pernicious vice, as it effectually marrs one's happineſs, by hindering his advancement toward ſuch degrees of perfection

as

as ſhould have made one qualified for the enjoyments of it.

To find out the original, and aſſign the cauſe, of this neceſſary imperfection, ſo obſervable in the moſt perfect beings which fall under our obſervation, exceedingly perplexed the old philoſophers, and led them into abſurdities, not worth any one's while to recount in the light wherein we now ſtand. Nor may this be conſtructed into a diſparagement of their great abilities; as I am well ſatisfied, the acuteſt of our natural theologiſts would have acquitted themſelves not one jot better, had it been their unhappineſs to lie under their diſadvantages. Thoſe who are commonly reckoned the moſt abſurd, were perhaps the moſt rational of all, and undoubtedly the honeſteſt; making thereby a fair acknowledgement of the vanity of all the attempts that had been made to account for theſe ſort of appearances, and the impoſſibility of doing it on any *data* they had to reaſon upon.

The modern pretenders to reaſon, who reſolve all into what they call nature, are nothing ſo excuſable. Had they been ſo honeſt as to have told us what it was they

meant by that name, ſome judgement might have been made concerning it: but then it would have appeared either pure amuſement, without any meaning, or that very conſtitution we are inquiring about; which it would be very abſurd to make the cauſe of itſelf; unleſs they mean, as ſome of the old philoſophers did, that the matter of the univerſe being eternal, and though under the management of a plaſtic mind, a ſpirit pervading the whole, and diſpoſing it to the beſt advantage; yet the nature and eſſence of every thing being eternal and unalterable, he was obliged to take it as he found it, and make the beſt of ſuch materials: whence they conceived all the weakneſſes and imperfections in the univerſe to take their riſe, and to continue without any remedy.

How much more eaſy and rational is it, in all reſpects, for one formed as we are, from the viſible appearances of boundleſs wiſdom and power in the ſtructure of the univerſe, and all the parts of it, and the good aſſurances we have of the interpoſal of the ſame power on proper occaſions, inverting and controlling the eſtabliſhed courſe of nature, to

to believe the tradition which has been in the world ever ſince there were any men to receive it, that the whole owes its exiſtence, as well as diſpoſition, to the immenſe power and boundleſs wiſdom of the firſt and original being, now acknowledged by every body who has any pretenſions to thought or reflection.

It muſt be indeed acknowledged, that creation out of nothing, or giving being to what before was not, is as much above all our natural ideas and conceptions, as it is beyond the compaſs of any power known to us. Nor is it at all likely, that ever it would have entered the mind of man, had it not been diſcovered to them, and the memory of it continued in the ſame manner that other facts are. And, by the event, it appears, that even then it would have been totally loſt, as in effect it once was to the far greateſt part of the world, had it not been from time to time ſupported, and mens minds raiſed to a capacity of believing it, by an analogous power put forth as occaſion required in the government of the world. But when mens minds are thus prepared, many things caſt up which would have been overlooked; and

almoſt

almoſt every thing one meets with, has a native tendency to eſtabliſh this great and fundamental truth.

The natural and neceſſary conſequence of this muſt be, an abſolute and entire dependence of all inferior beings on their great author and creator. It is certainly no affected way of ſpeaking, but the very truth of the thing, that every creature is originally nothing; and a very little attention will ſatisfy any one, that the very beſt of them ſtand but a very few removes from it; infinitely nearer at leaſt than they are to perfect being. Whatever meaſures or degrees of being or powers they have, is only by the free gift of their maker; and it is impoſſible for them ever to acquire a property in theſe, otherwiſe than by his gracious indulgence. When they have acted up to the higheſt their conſtitution will admit of, they have no pretenſions to merit; nay not ſo much as requiting their creator for what they have received. It can never riſe higher than bare innocence; and the leaſt failure muſt be criminal.

As the being of all created things is at beſt but borrowed, ſo it muſt be abſolutely precarious, and the continuance of it depend

depend entirely on him who firſt beſtowed it. No one moment of their duration has any neceſſary connection with another; as they were raiſed at firſt, they muſt be continually ſupported, by almighty power; which, perhaps, is that very myſterious thing, ſo commonly talked of, but ſo little underſtood, under the names of *being*, *life*, *ſubſtance*, &c. And the withdrawing of this muſt needs leave them in their original ſtate of nothing. Hence, to talk of the natural immortality of this ſort of beings, is really to talk contradictions; unleſs they could have life in themſelves, and become proprietors of their own being and powers. This would eſtabliſh an independency inconſiſtent with the very notion of a creature, and put it in that very ſtate the Stoics abſurdly imagined their wiſe man. They may be indeed aſſured of their eternal duration another way; but that muſt be juſt as much the free gift of God as their firſt creation was.

The exiſtence then, and duration, of the moſt perfect creatures, being thus in the hand of God, the exerciſe of all their powers, and all the actions ariſing from them, muſt be likewiſe owing to him; and

to

to him belongs the honour of all the good that ever was or will be in the world. But it muſt be remembered, that they are only thoſe ſorts of actions which are founded in the conſtitution as he has eſtabliſhed it, we thus ſpeak of. But if any of them will abuſe the powers he has intruſted with them, not he, but they, muſt anſwer for the conſequences.

From all this it muſt follow, that as none of theſe dependent beings have any thing of their own to value themſelves upon, much leſs to boaſt of, they can never be the object of happineſs to themſelves, but muſt ſeek it from without; ſo that of all vices ſelf-enjoyment muſt be the moſt monſtrous and unnatural. This is evidently the prerogative of an abſolutely and independently perfect being; and can no more be communicated, than that perfection which alone can ſupport it. The happineſs, as well as being, of every creature, is in his hand; and by the ſame conſtitution according to which he has founded the ſeveral capacities of his creatures, he has bountifully provided, and ſo laid to their hands their proper fund of enjoyment, that they can never want an adequate happineſs, if they

they live up to the powers which one way or other he has furniſhed them with.

It is here, then, we are to look for the true ſtandard of created excellency, viz. in the extent of their capacity; what objects their conſtitution admits the enjoyment of; in what manner, and to what purpoſes, they are taken in; and how they are improved. And this leads us to take ſome general view of the objects or materials of creature-happineſs, both in themſelves, and their proper worth; but eſpecially in the relation they bear to the ſeveral orders of creatures, whoſe happineſs they are deſigned to miniſter to.

In the firſt view, it is but a ſorry account we can make of the ſeveral objects of enjoyment; as there are few fall under our obſervation, and it is but a very ſuperficial knowledge we have of thoſe which do. And yet, as we may be very certain, that ſpirits, or beings poſſeſſed of active powers, greatly excel dead inactive matter; and the great creator, the father of all ſpirits, infinitely excels all created ones; we may hence very juſtly conclude, that thoſe ſorts of conſtitutions which admit of no pleaſure but what ariſes from the application of

matter, are greatly inferior to ſuch as are fitted for the rational pleaſures of ſociety; as thoſe likewiſe who are capable of reliſhing nothing above the creature, muſt, of courſe, fall as much ſhort of thoſe which are made to take in the beauty and glory of the ſovereign being, and to find their pleaſure in the intercourſes of friendſhip and communion with him, in whom all fulneſs dwells. There is no doubt a very great odds among created objects, and the enjoyment of them; which may make as many ſubdiviſions in thoſe lower ranks of beings which live only on the creature; but we do not chuſe to ſtand upon them here.

It is in the ſeveral relations that the objects without bear to the creatures whoſe happineſs and enjoyment they are ſubſervient to, that they are moſt properly to be conſidered, as being the moſt natural and intereſting view, where all things appear evidently made for one another. Whatever they may contribute toward this purpoſe, ſome more, ſome leſs, they all go under the general deſignation of *good*, and their contraries *evil*; and thus naturally ſtand in certain ranks and claſſes.

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The firſt, and moſt obvious, are ſuch as contribute to ſupport life, and maintain the borrowed precarious being in a proper plight for the buſineſs and enjoyments peculiar to the conſtitution. This is familiarly known under the animal life, by the name of *food* and *nouriſhment*. And with this ſtand connected ſuch things as though not ſtrictly neceſſary for ſubſiſtence, yet contribute to the eaſe and comforts of life; ſuch, viz. as ward off, or relieve from, pain and uneaſineſs in body or mind, or whatever may mar enjoyment in any degree. That there muſt be ſomething analogous to this in the life of ſpirits, will eaſily be allowed; though the little intercourſe men have with that ſort of beings, except ſuch as ſtand connected with animal bodies, makes moſt men incapable of ſo much as gueſſing wherein it lies, or what is the proper ſupport and nouriſhment of unembodied ſpirits; though we may be ſure, in the general, it muſt be ſomething that keeps them in the friendſhip and favour of God; by whoſe power they ſubſiſt, and in whom their whole fund of pleaſure lies.

Next come to be conſidered ſuch things as contribute toward the improvement of

the creature, and raiſing it as high toward perfection as its particular conſtitution will admit of; and thereby enlarging its capacity, ſo as it may, with eaſe and pleaſure, take in the beſt and moſt valuable enjoyments that fall to its ſhare. The improvements we hinted at before, which men, and ſeveral other animals, are capable of, and of which we have new inſtances before us every day, abundantly explain the importance of this claſs.

But what has in a manner ingroſſed the title of *good*, and are by moſt men looked upon as the only fund of happineſs, are ſuch as, by the proper application of them, adminiſter immediate pleaſure, whether it is of the ſenſible or ſpiritual kind. And as pleaſures are juſt of as many different kinds, as there are different conſtitutions, ſpiritual, animal, or mixed and compounded of both, they come to be naturally diſtinguiſhed by the ſeveral ſenſes and inlets of pleaſure in the animal life, and the ſeveral powers of ſpirits,—if there are indeed any different powers in the ſimplicity of the pure ſpiritual life, or if they are not rather imagined ſuch from the imperfect models from which we form our conceptions of

of them; that is, every man, from his own mind, involved in, and often overpowered by, the animal ſenſations.

Hence the ſeveral objects, and the importance of them to happineſs, may be very juſtly determined by the ſeveral purpoſes they anſwer, and what they contribute towards its ſubſiſtence, improvement, and actual pleaſure. The firſt, without the laſt, is ſo little ſatisfying, that many have choſen to throw away their lives when diſappointed of the pleaſure they had in view. Nor is pleaſure ſimply of any account, unleſs it is ſuch as becomes the being which enjoys it. In many caſes it rather ſinks, debaſes, and deſtroys, than contributes any thing to true and ſolid happineſs. The firſt is the foundation and ground-work on which the whole fabrick is built; the ſecond fits and qualifies for proper enjoyments; and the third furniſhes out the proper materials, and applies them to anſwer their ſeveral purpoſes.

By this, then, we may judge what are the proper objects of happineſs; ſuch, viz. as ſuit the conſtitution; not one part of it ſeparately, which, in compound beings like ours, may often hurt the more noble; but

but the whole taken together, and improved to the higheſt pitch of perfection it will admit. What ſuits any lower degrees only, it is evident cannot be the proper happineſs of that creature.

And hence it will follow, that nothing can be the proper object of enjoyment, except what is every way commenſurate to the capacity and duration of that being whoſe happineſs is made to conſiſt in it, ſo as at the ſame time to ſatisfy all the wants, cravings, and deſires, the higheſt improvement the conſtitution admits of, and to continue at leaſt as long as that ſhall ſtand. If any deſires or wants are left unſatisfied, it embitters all other enjoyments; and if the object of enjoyment is loſt, the miſery is inſupportable.

It appears likewiſe, that no object, however otherwiſe qualified, can furniſh out ſuch ſolid ſatisfaction as is required to conſtitute any thing near happineſs, without an entire property in it, and ſuch poſſeſſion of it, as one can have free acceſs at all times to the enjoyment of: And as there is but one object in the univerſe of beings that can admit multitudes partners, without diminiſhing either the intereſt or

enjoyment

enjoyment of every individual, the happineſs of thoſe ſorts of beings muſt be very low and precarious, who, either from the neceſſity of their conſtitution, or a very ill-judged choice, are led to pitch upon any thing below the favour and friendſhip of the all-ſufficient being. Every creature we know of, unleſs it is the light of the heavens, is capable of being ingroſſed by a few; or at leaſt muſt be divided, and ſo parcelled out, as that one ſhall want juſt as much as another poſſeſſes: and as they are but ſmall parcels of ſublunary goods that can fall to any one's ſhare, the attainment will ſcarce balance the labour of the purſuit; and the uneaſineſs ariſing from his wants, will more than outweigh what he poſſeſſes; and thus, by marring the enjoyment, deſtroy his happineſs.

ESSAY II.

Of the Human Conſtitution and Capacity, ariſing upon the proper improvement of it.

TO make any thing near a juſt eſtimate of human happineſs, one muſt be, in

in the firſt place, furniſhed with the proper knowledge of his capacity and power, what ſort of objects he can take in, and what advantage he can make by them; or, which is nearly the ſame, what meaſures of perfection he is limited and confined to by his frame and conſtitution: and therefore the firſt ſtep one has to take, who propoſes to do any thing to the purpoſe in theſe inquiries, muſt be, to acquaint himſelf with the human conſtitution, and the ſeveral degrees of improvement it may admit of. That is the firſt part, and the very foundation of that knowledge of one's ſelf, which has been allowed by the wiſeſt maſters the proper buſineſs of mankind; and without which, it is impoſſible to make any thing of the moſt uſeful knowledge, but error and confuſion.

There are only two direct ways of attaining this neceſſary piece of knowledge; an immediate intuitive perception of every thing belonging to the conſtitution itſelf; or, where that cannot be had, ſuch a narrow examination of thoſe qualities and powers which fall under our obſervation, as may lead us up to the beſt views we can attain, of the ſprings from which they flow.

ſlow. The firſt of theſe is ſo much above our preſent abilities, or at leaſt goes ſo ſhort a way, and the other ſo laborious, and requiring ſo much accurate obſervation and attention, that few are able to make any thing of either. Whence the bulk of mankind are driven, either to quit the purſuit, or betake themſelves to a third; which is commonly reckoned by philoſophers an indirect way, that of authority and teſtimony: and perhaps even thoſe who value themſelves moſt on their impartial inquiries, are more influenced by it than they are willing to own, or perhaps themſelves believe. A wiſe man will make uſe of all the helps he can call in; and as the moſt extenſive genius cannot pretend to take in every particular with infallible exactneſs, one much below him may poſſibly diſcover, and even rectify, ſome of his miſtakes, without any affront to his ſuperior underſtanding.

There is one thing, I cannot help obſerving, has contributed very much to diſcourage ordinary people from this uſeful ſtudy: It is that myſterious air of learning, and profound ſcience, which ſpeculative and ſcholaſtic writers ſcatter over their

performances on theſe ſubjects, as if they ſcorned to ſay the moſt common and familiar things in a way that any but philoſophers ſhould underſtand. Certain it is, that there is not any one thing in the ſubject itſelf, but what falls as directly under the obſervation of a man of the plaineſt underſtanding, as of the profoundeſt philoſopher, abating perhaps ſome refinements, which no man living can ever comprehend. We propoſe, therefore, as much as poſſible, to avoid every thing that lies out of the common road; and endeavour to point out what every man may, by a little reflection on himſelf, bring to the only teſt of truth, obſervation and experience; and from theſe attempt to gather up ſuch an account of the human conſtitution, as may ſatisfy any plain man where he is to look for his happineſs.

Man is evidently a compounded being, made up of a great variety of parts; and theſe of very different natures, and ſuited to produce very different effects, and accordingly to anſwer very different purpoſes. All theſe have been long reduced to two general heads; known, or rather talked of, under the names of *body* and *ſoul*,

ſoul, or *matter* and *ſpirit*. Theſe united, as they are, in the neareſt and cloſeſt manner, ſo as to act on and by one another, produce what we call the human conſtitution; by which man is diſtinguiſhed from all other ranks and orders of beings, both ſuch as are above and ſuch as are below him: and in the knowledge of theſe component parts, and of their mutual dependence on, and ſubordination to, one another, in their uſes, actings, and operations, conſiſts that knowledge of ourſelves we have in view.

Our obſervations naturally begin at the outſide of the man, his body, and the ſeveral parts of it, united, as they are, in ſuch a manner, that even his outward form has been thought to carry in it the marks of his ſuperiority over other animals. However that may be, it is certainly wrong to talk contemptibly of it, as it is ſuited to anſwer the purpoſes of that life which he is deſigned for, and wherein his true dignity lies.

But what we can perceive on this ſuperficial view, however adorned and ſet off, is no more but the caſe or outward cover of the man. Thoſe who look farther, diſ-

cover under them a curious variety of parts, different in their make and texture, but all wonderfully adjuſted to anſwer their ſeveral purpoſes; and ſo united into one machine, that each of them contributes to the ſupport and preſervation of the whole, without the leaſt interfering, or marring the peculiar operations of any of them.

Theſe are all of them found reduced into three very diſtinct ſyſtems, for anſwering ſo many diſtinct purpoſes in life; the firſt adjuſted in all points for taking in and diſtributing proper ſupplies, for ſupporting and maintaining the ſeveral parts of the animal machine in their proper degree of bulk, ſtrength, or whatever other purpoſes they have to anſwer, each of them in their proper place; the ſecond, conſiſting of the ſurpriſingly curious, and even amazing, apparatus of the ſeveral ſenſes, for giving the proper and neceſſary notices of the things about us, and by which the ſeveral impreſſions made by external objects are received and conveyed; and the third, a combination as curious, of inſtruments and organs, by which the man exerts his active powers.

It

It is an obvious obſervation, but of great importance on many accounts, that the operations of the firſt of theſe ſyſtems, that, viz. which regards the animal œconomy, is not at all under the man's direction; the ſecond, but very little; whereas the third is almoſt wholly, if not altogether: and therefore he is very juſtly reckoned wholly accountable for theſe laſt; and no further for the other two, than he has, or may have, a hand in vitiating or improving the organs or powers concerned in conducting them.

The ſtructure of the general ſyſtem, where we find theſe three ſo cloſely united, ſo as none of them can ſubſiſt or act ſeparately or independently on the other, and particularly the notices of external things, for the moſt part neceſſarily conveyed by the ſenſes, and their organs, compared with the apparatus of the executive powers, very naturally lead us to ſome ruling principle within, for receiving the one, and managing the other; and that with ſuch ſtrength of reaſon, that one may venture to ſay, the thing has never been ſeriouſly queſtioned by any one perſon in the world.

But

But long before the moſt diligent obſerver can get at this ſame inward ruler, the bodily machinery runs into ſuch ſubtile and ſeemingly intricate mazes, as elude the eye, with all the aſſiſtances it can procure; and thereby leaves room for a variety of conjectures; from which have ariſen thoſe perplexed, and many of them unintelligible, diſputes, concerning matter and ſpirit, their nature, properties, and powers.

It is not eaſy, nor indeed poſſible, for ſuch low beings as we are, to ſay, with any appearance of certainty, how far, what all are agreed to call *matter*, may be refined and ſubtilized, what curious ſyſtems it may be formed into, and what it may be made capable of, when under the management of boundleſs power. Our irremediable ignorance of the nature of what we call *being* and *life*, the internal eſſence and very ſubſtance of matter, makes us utterly incapable of forming any certain judgement concerning it, or the preciſe difference between it and what we call *ſpirit*; neither have we any way of forming any notion of it, but by the properties and powers of thoſe ſorts of beings which

which fall under our obſervation. And among theſe we are neceſſarily led to conclude, that ſome are altogether inert and inactive, incapable of putting either themſelves, or any thing elſe, into motion, any further than they are impelled and driven on by ſomething elſe. Others, again, we are in the ſame manner led to conceive of, as poſſeſſed of ſome principle of activity, which, though we cannot give a diſtinct account of, yet we give it the name of *power* too; a thing very eaſy to apprehend, as it lies in nature; but when run up into its latent cauſes, which lie quite out of reach, altogether unintelligible. The firſt of theſe we call *matter*, and the other *ſpirit*.

This has been the prevailing notion in all ages, and the characteriſtic made uſe of to this day, among the men who are not accuſtomed to philoſophical reaſonings, as they have been practiſed in theſe latter ages. Whatever either really was, or was imagined to be, the ſpring and principle of motion of any kind, life, action, vegetation, or any alteration whatſoever, either in earthly or celeſtial bodies, was aſcribed to what they called *ſpirit*. Hence aroſe

aroſe the notion ſo univerſally entertained, not only of a ſpirit pervading the whole, and managing the whole machinery of the univerſe; but of certain inferior ones, whoſe province it was to take care of every part. All the writings, both of their philoſophers and poets, are full of inſtances. Nor did it ever enter into their heads, that thoſe inviſible ſprings of life and motion were of a nature ſo oppoſite to what they knew to be purely paſſive, as not to occupy ſpace, nor to have any amplitude or expanſion belonging to their eſſence. So far from it, that in all languages, we find the appellation of *ſpirit* given, as it is to this day, to many things which are ſenſibly material; the wind, the breath of animals, and others, which though not ſo ſenſibly ſo, yet are univerſally allowed to be matter in the ſtricteſt ſenſe.

The great refinements of the moderns, and accurate diſtinguiſhing between proper ſpirit and the moſt ſubtilized matter, have not perhaps more advanced human knowledge, than the metaphyſical quirks and ſubtilties it has been attended with, have embarraſſed mens minds, and by putting them to form abſtract conceptions,

or,

or, as they will have them called, *ideas*, of pure ſpirit, above the utmoſt ſtretch of human powers, the true, eaſy, and diſtinguiſhing notion of a ſpirit, is not attended to; and while they reach at what they can never attain, they loſe what might have fully anſwered their purpoſe. As it is impoſſible, even by the moſt hypermetaphyſical abſtraction, to ſeparate the idea of any being whatſoever from ſome relation to ſpace, and conſequently ſome kind of extenſion or amplitude; ſo long as theſe are made the eſſential properties of dead inactive matter, and appropriated to it only, men may amuſe, but will never be able to ſatisfy, either themſelves or others, of the being of any thing elſe. The man who can be content to be thought ignorant of what no man can poſſibly know, the very eſſence, or even the inward frame and conſtitution of things, may well ſatisfy himſelf with that obvious difference; which, as it lies open to all, in ſo many familiar inſtances, can be eaſily apprehended, and fully anſwers all the purpoſes of the human life, in its higheſt improvement, and utmoſt extent: Every body, the plaineſt labourer, is thoroughly ſatisfied of the

difference there is between thoſe ſorts of beings which are endued with life and activity, and ſenſeleſs inactive matter; and will readily own, there is as great an odds in their worth and excellency. And what can the acuteſt philoſopher do more, after all his troubleſome ſpeculations and concluſions?

There are only two ſorts of active powers known to us, viz. thoſe which produce thought and motion; if indeed theſe are two different powers, or rather if the laſt is not more properly the effect of the other, as there are more than probable reaſons to perſuade us it is. We know that parcels of groſs matter may, even by ſuch low meaſures of ſkill and contrivance as man can attain, be ſo put together, as ſhall form a machine, which ſhall not need the maker's hand ſo much as to put it in motion, far leſs to continue it. Neither does any body doubt, that the bodies of plants and animals eſpecially are ſuch, though formed with a contrivance as much ſuperior to man's, as their maker is wiſer and more ſkilful than he; to ſay nothing of the truly ſtupendous mechaniſm of the heavens, by which all in this our world, and,

and, we have good reaſon to believe, every where elſe through the univerſe, is managed. But had it not been for the thought and contrivance of the great artificer, none of theſe, neither the great nor ſmaller machines, could have ſubſiſted; and the whole matter of them ſhould have continued in the ſame condition in which we find many of them, when their conſtitution is diſſolved, and mouldered down into as inactive matter as any in the univerſe.

As it is certainly very hard, or rather utterly impoſſible, for man to diſtinguiſh where thought and motion are united, and where motion ſubſiſts alone, with any degree of certainty, there is the utmoſt danger of miſtaking, if that can be called danger which concerns our happineſs ſo little. Until experience and obſervation convince us of the contrary, we are apt to imagine ſomething of life like our own, where-ever we diſcern motion, without perceiving the impulſes and impreſſions which occaſion it. This made many of the ancients, who were no more fools than we, to imagine, that the ſun and moon, with the other heavenly bodies, were animated beings; and to find, in every foun-

tain, ſtream, and ſhady grove, ſome ſpirit poſſeſſed of certain unknown powers, which filled them with a ſuperſtitious kind of veneration toward the moſt inſenſible objects.

Whether the brute part of the animal world is poſſeſſed of any properly active principle, ſuch as we call *ſpirit*, and the power of thinking; or if all the motions and effects which to us ſeem only producible by ſuch a cauſe, are really owing only to the proper organization of ſuitable kinds of matter, ſo formed as to produce them all by the different impreſſions made upon them by the objects they are encompaſſed with,—ſeems impoſſible to determine with any thing like certainty in our preſent ſtate: nor would it ever have been worth any one's while to have made the inquiry, had it not been for the conſequences that have been tacked to the deciſion on either ſide, very nearly affecting the ſubject we have under conſideration. If brutes are concluded to be poſſeſſed of an active principle, or proper ſpirit; whatever argument concludes for the immortality of one, muſt hold of both; or rather, as it is univerſally concluded, that the ſouls of brutes periſh

periſh with their bodies, it is pretended a juſt concluſion, that the ſouls of men ſhould do ſo likewiſe. On the other hand, if brute animals are mere machines, and all thoſe things we call their actions, ſo ſimilar to the human ones, are no more but the effects of mere matter, one part impelling another, there can be no reaſon aſſigned, why a finer organization may not account for all thoſe we call actions in men; whence it will be inferred, with great appearance of reaſon, that the whole buſineſs of the moral, as well as material world, is carried on in the ſame neceſſary courſe; that it is impoſſible any thing can be otherwiſe than it comes out to be. Which would put an end at once to the whole of our inquiry after happineſs: The whole of what is called improvement and perfection muſt be vain and whimſical; and, upon the whole, every man muſt take his fate what he is to be and do.

But however ſuperficial men may pleaſe themſelves with theſe, which it is likely enough they will reckon very ſmart turns, there will no manner of hurt be done by them, whichſoever ſide of the queſtion one chuſes to take, unleſs they are allowed

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to aſſume ſome yet more groundleſs poſition. It will indeed, I think, be acknowledged by every fair reaſoner, that the firſt ſuppoſition, viz. that brutes have a true and proper ſpirit in them, will effectually deſtroy the main argument for the natural immortality of the human ſoul, taken from the ſpirituality or immaterial nature of its conſtitution; unleſs any one will venture the abſurdity of allowing the ſouls of brutes the ſame privilege. But it will by no means follow, that the great proprietor of being ſhould indulge one order of ſpirits with the gift of immortality, while others, not only of an inferior, but even of the ſame, nay, and of a ſuperior kind, are left to periſh. And, on the other hand, though all the appearance of action in brutes ſhould be reſolved into mere material mechaniſm, it will follow indeed, that all the ſimilar effects in man may be accounted for in the ſame manner; but, at the ſame time, if men will put themſelves into proper circumſtances for obſerving it, it will be found, that there are ſuch viſible and undeniable evidences of proper activity in what we call *the human mind*, and ſo much above what there are any veſtiges

of

of in brutes, that there is no manner of foundation for the pretended concluſions. I ſaid, if men will put themſelves into proper circumſtances for obſervation; becauſe, it is very poſſible, ſome may live in ſuch a manner, that there ſhall not be found any thing about them which can reaſonably infer any ſuperiority above their fellow-animals of the brutal tribe; and both, perhaps, as mechanically as the cabbages grow in their gardens.

As there is, without queſtion, a very great ſimilarity between what we call the external actions, and even the internal frame and bodily conſtitution, in both, the ſame kind of organs producing the ſame ſenſible effects; ſo there is not any one of theſe which may not, with great appearance of reaſon, be reſolved into that peculiar kind of mechaniſm which we call the animal frame or fabrick, common to both men and beaſts. And as this makes one great part of the human conſtitution, we cannot propoſe to make out any tolerable view of it, without conſidering theſe ſomewhat particularly.

To begin then where nature ſeems to do, with that part of the general ſyſtem which

which ſerves to take in and diſtribute the proper nouriſhment to the ſeveral parts of the body: We find every organ exactly ſimilar, unleſs, perhaps, in the fineneſs or coarſeneſs, ſtrength or weakneſs, or other ſuch, adapted as they are to the ſeveral ſorts of food on which they appear deſigned to ſubſiſt: and no body doubts that the human body is maintained in its ſtrength and vigour, and carried on to its proper bulk and ſtature, preciſely in the ſame manner that thoſe of other animals are; which the active principle in man has no more power either to hinder or forward, than if there was none at all there; unleſs by with-holding the proper nouriſhment, or employing in thought and reflection ſome of thoſe parts which ſhould have been aſſiſting in digeſting, or otherwiſe diſtributing the aliment: yet it never was pretended, that the effects of this ſyſtem were any other than purely mechanical.

Our obſervations, it is true, can go but a ſhort way in the other two particular ſyſtems; extending only to ſome few of the more groſs and external parts, while the ſprings, or whatever it is that immediately plays

plays the bodily machinery, are quite a ſecret to us. But ſo far as we do obſerve, the ſeveral organs, and component parts, bating the above-mentioned circumſtantial differences, are pretty near alike in all perfect animals, at leaſt of the ſame kind; which gives more than a preſumption, that what lies inward, the more ſubtile, and, as we are apt to deem them ſpirituous parts, are ſo likewiſe.

And here it is allowed by every body, that even man, with all the advantages he has about him, in the firſt impreſſions and impulſes which are made on the external organs of ſenſe, is altogether paſſive; and that indeed the whole is no more, through all the variety of the ſeveral ſenſations, as we call them, than one parcel or ſyſtem of matter moving another. It is evidently ſo in thoſe paintings which light, ſtriking upon the eye, makes of thoſe objects which lie within its compaſs. The vibrations and little bounces of the air againſt the ear, varied into an almoſt infinite variety of ſounds; the little particles ſtriking on the fine fibres or ramifications of the appropriated nerves in taſte and ſmell, however ſmall and ſubtile, are ſtill confeſſedly ma-

terial; much more thoſe coarſer feelings, excited by groſſer matter in the collection of ſenſations which go under that general name. And however the pleaſures and pains occaſioned by external objects may be, as they certainly are in rational beings, mixed with the actings of a higher principle; yet the riſe and original of them is no more than one part of matter impelling and moving another, according to their ſeveral natures and conſtitutions, in as neceſſary and mechanical a way as a clock ſtrikes, or one ball drives another.

If we look further into the effects which the ſeveral impulſes thus made on the ſeveral appropriated parts of the animal ſyſtem, if not regulated by ſome active mind, naturally produce there, and the manner in which the executive ſyſtem is influenced and ſet agoing by them, according to their different impreſſions, we will find very ſtrong preſumptions, if not full evidence, that the whole is carried on by a certain ſubtile, and therefore to us inexplicable, mechaniſm in man himſelf, as well as other animals. Certain it is, that the inſtruments and organs of both ſyſtems, not only take their riſe together,

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but are ſo very cloſely connected in the general ſyſtem, that one cannot be any how moved without affecting the other. And could we carry our views further, into the more ſubtile and fine parts, it is hardly to be doubted, the connection would be found yet nearer and more immediate.

It is further to be obſerved, and will not be refuſed by any one who has at all conſidered the riſe and ſprings of human actions, that what we call the paſſions and affections, are the immediate movers in all thoſe, without exception, which are performed by the body; and that they have more influence on the mind itſelf, than any one can imagine who has not carefully obſerved it. Whether theſe are different names only, or expreſs things really different; when they are not under the command of the active ruling principle, they certainly command the whole man: and cannot ſo properly be ſaid to determine, as to make or create what we call the will; and accordingly employ every power and organ.

It is not for nothing that theſe bear the name of *paſſions* and *affections*, as they are produced by the ſeveral impreſſions and impulſes on the material parts of the

conſtitution, at leaſt as naturally and neceſſarily as could be done by the moſt eſtabliſhed laws of motion and mechaniſm. This is moſt diſcernible in children and wild men; even more than in the tame ſort of beaſts; where, by human ſkill, the paſſions are brought under ſome ſuch reſtraint as they are among civilized men. But in all wild animals whatſoever, the ſenſation makes its correſpondent affection or paſſion with as much certainty and uniformity, as the impreſſion produces the ſenſation itſelf. And if it is further conſidered, how, even in the moſt civilized part of mankind, on ſudden ſurpriſes, paſſions are raiſed, which the greateſt ſtrength of mind cannot reſtrain, that hurry the beſt reaſoner into a courſe of action which occaſions the quickeſt and moſt laſting remorſe, it cannot be doubted, that they are more owing to the ſtrength of the animal mechaniſm than to any other cauſe whatſoever.

If we add further, what, on a very ſmall degree of reflection, every one muſt feel in himſelf, that every affection and paſſion is always attended with certain peculiar movements of the fluid and more ſubtile parts

of

of the ſyſtem, appropriated to each of them; and producing very ſenſible alterations in the body itſelf, we may diſcover much of the true cauſe of the ſtrength and impetuoſity of our paſſions; and find reaſon to conclude, that what we call their attendant is really their cauſe. This is much more obſervable in ſome of them than in others; but there are none, even the loweſt degrees of affection, the moſt refined of them, which will not, on due inquiry, be found to owe a great part of their ſtrength, and their very being, to ſome particular movements of the animal ſyſtem. Anger and fear are among the moſt remarkable, and which mutually deſtroy one another. On many occaſions, it is evident, they are no more under the direction of the mind, than the animal digeſtion, or the circulation of the fluids in his body are. Shame and ſelf-approbation have as ſenſible feelings, though of another kind, always attending them. Nay, love and hatred, the radical and leading affections, down to the loweſt inclinations and averſions, have ſo evidently their roots deeply ſpread in the animal mechaniſm, that the heart, about the ſeat of which

theſe

theſe paſſionate feelings are moſt diſcernible, is in all languages put for their very ſeat; and to love or hate with all one's *heart*, to be *heartily* angry or pleaſed, &c. is the ſtrongeſt and moſt uſual expreſſion of the higheſt degree of them.

And from this may be gathered a further illuſtration of what we were obſerving, of the paſſions and affections being the immediate ſprings of human actions. Whatever it is that is meant by the heart in theſe caſes, that is univerſally allowed to be ſo; and whenever it comes to be underſtood, will be found to be no other than that very modification of the animal ſyſtem we were ſpeaking of; that is, the machinery, ſo ſet and wound up, as it were, to the pitch proper for producing ſuch a ſeries of actions. Whether this is done by external impreſſions, or the inward agency of the active mind, makes no odds in the preſent caſe; but until the ſyſtem is thus formed, the mind, with the utmoſt efforts of the rational powers, may indeed produce faint velleities, or ineffectual wiſhes; but until the heart is engaged, i. e. the animal mechaniſm right ſet for the

the purpoſe, no permanent courſe of action does, or can follow.

I will not ſtand to obſerve particularly how this muſt be the meaning of that ſo very common expreſſion. It is ſufficient to evince it, that all the conſtructions that were, or indeed can be, made of its meaning, neceſſarily run into this: The heart is the principal part of the machine, at leaſt by which the whole is maintained in its proper plight for action. Hence it may be conſtructed to ſignify, the moſt inward, the moſt effective part, and thence the whole man without any reſerve; which cannot be without the immediate powers, whether principal, or only inſtrumental, which muſt produce the effect in view.

The ſame dependence of human actions on the diſpoſition of the animal mechaniſm, appears with yet further evidence, by the effects of intoxicating liquors and drugs, of the bodily conſtitution in idiots and madmen, of diſeaſes producing deliriums and doſings, &c. It is evident, theſe can operate no otherwiſe than mechanically; and yet it is as evident, how thoroughly they command the executive powers

powers in the unhappy perſons who are under their influence.

The great influence which cuſtom and habit has on the conduct of life, leads ſtrongly to the ſame concluſion; how men fall into them many times inſenſibly, and without any deſign, by repeated acts, as occaſion offers; how eaſily they go on in the ſame courſe; how uneaſy when reſtrained; carried often ſo far, as to bring a ſenſible diſtreſs on the body; and how hard to be overcome and eradicated, even where one is thoroughly perſuaded of their pernicious tendency, and, upon the whole, impoſſible, until contrary habits are induced by a contrary courſe of action. Whence can all this proceed, and much more to the ſame purpoſe, but from this, that the ſecret ſprings of the machine are formed into ſuch a courſe, as to go ſo eaſily and naturally there, that they cannot, without a ſort of violence, be determined another way? The inſtincts of animals, as they are called, by their invariable courſe, plainly lead to the ſame cauſe: Which will likewiſe account for ſuch as, approaching ſo near ſome of the moſt noble human powers, has induced many to imagine, they

they were poſſeſſed, not only of ſome inferior degrees of activity, but even judgement and reaſon: A conceit not a jot better founded, than what we uſe to laugh at in children, who imagine every thing feels juſt as they do.

Could we reach the myſtery of that very common, and yet moſt aſtoniſhing thing, called *ſleep*, ſo natural and neceſſary to every animal, we might be able to ſay ſomething further on this ſubject; how all the powers of the mind, as well as body, languiſh, until recruited with that reſt, which nature, or, to ſay more juſtly, the great author of it, has prepared; how all the labouring powers gradually languiſh away into an abſolute reſt, except ſuch as muſt be kept conſtantly going for preſerving the conſtitution; the unconnected images which moſtly preſent themſelves in dreams, occaſioned, as would ſeem, by ſome half-felt impulſes, or the impreſſions made by former ones; the lively vigour healthy perſons feel after a ſound ſleep. What ſhall we ſay? Is the immaterial ſpirit wearied out? or can it not act without the material machinery of the body? In either caſe, it is evident, mechaniſm muſt

bear a very great ſway in our conſtitution.

But whether the animal ſoul, the principle of what we call *life and action*, in brutes, be the mere reſult of this mechaniſm, or ſomething poſſeſſed of a ſuitable degree of activity; it may not be refuſed, that man is poſſeſſed of it; and whatever he is more, he certainly is a perfect animal; which yet he cannot be without the eſſential parts. Nor may it be imagined, that the want of it is ſupplied by a more noble principle, the rational ſpirit, in man. For however plauſible this may appear on a curſory view; yet, as it is aſſumed without any foundation; ſo that rational mind being a principle of quite another nature, can never anſwer the purpoſes of the other, nor produce the effects peculiar to it, which every one does or may feel every day, by any other way than acting upon and by it, ſo as a man may become perfect maſter of his own actions. As this appears to have been the conſtant and fixed principle of the men of the firſt ages, and the belief of the firſt Chriſtians, evidently ſuppoſed by the Apoſtle Paul in all his writings, and expreſsly mentioned in

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ſome of them; ſo it is notoriouſly known to have been expreſsly acknowledged by all, or at leaſt the moſt eminent of, the Gentile philoſophers; and by which they endeavoured to account for thoſe palpable contradictions ſo obvious in the human conſtitution.

But at the ſame time that man is allowed the poſſeſſion of every thing neceſſary for the management of the animal mechaniſm in his conſtitution, if he had not more, it muſt be granted, that if he is not among the loweſt ſpecies, yet being, as he naturally is, the worſt provided againſt the accidents of life, he muſt be the moſt miſerable of them all. For, to ſay nothing of the advantages many of the brutal tribe have, by their ſuperior ſtrength of body, acuteneſs of ſenſe, agility, and ſuch other qualities, hardly any of them are known to want a ſort of conſtitutional ſagacity, which we call *inſtinct*; by which they are unerringly determined, both to their proper food and way of living, and all the ends of life; ſuch as they appear to have been deſigned for by the author of their conſtitution: whereas man, born as he is, muſt be in the moſt deplorably helpleſs circum-

ſtances, and incapable of chuſing for himſelf; without any means of knowing what is good or bad for him, until he acquires it by experience and obſervation; and a hundred to one if he did not deſtroy himſelf by his heedleſsneſs, ere he had obſerved enough to warn him againſt the moſt obvious evils. Theſe, and ſuch other conſiderations, furniſh a ſtrong preſumption, that there muſt be ſomething in his conſtitution to compenſate the manifold diſadvantages he labours under, and balance the numerous dangers he is expoſed to.

But there is no occaſion for having recourſe to preſumptions and probabilities, when every man has in himſelf a full proof, and ſuch as comes neareſt intuitive evidence, that man is poſſeſſed of an activity in the moſt proper ſenſe, ſuch as no mechaniſm whatſoever can approach to, and effectually diſtinguiſhes him from the moſt perfect and moſt improved mere animal. This goes under the name of the *human mind* or *ſpirit*; and is likewiſe called the *human ſoul*, in contradiſtinction to the *animal*, as it either is, or ought to be, the ſpring of human actions; and is indeed the only

only thing that can diſtinguiſh them from thoſe of brutes. It is true, indeed, this ſame ſpiritual or active part of the human frame, cannot be brought under the notice of any of our ſenſes: but this is no more a prejudice againſt the reality of its being, than the ſubtilty of the far greateſt part of the matter of the univerſe is. Neither can the moſt penetrating philoſopher, or improved genius, ever reach a direct view of its ſubſtance or eſſence: but in this reſpect likewiſe it is no more inconceivable than the groſſeſt matter. The moſt that can be made, even of ſuch things as fall moſt fully under our obſervation, is ſome circumſtances with which we find them conſtantly attended; whence we gather up ſuch of them as are the moſt conſiderable, and call them *eſſential properties*. And ſure we may ſay very poſitively, that there is no being whatſoever we have ſuch opportunities of being thoroughly acquainted with, if we will but attend to thoſe operations and actings of the mind, which are, beyond compariſon, more intimately near us, than ſuch as are only under our eye. We are, or may be, conſcious of every movement or tendency toward action, its ſtrength

ſtrength and weakneſs, of every property and every power belonging to it, in a more certain manner, than we can pretend to know any other being whatſoever, not excepting our own bodies.

That conſciouſneſs the mind of man neceſſarily has of its own being, its actions and powers, with whatever impreſſions or impulſes are made on every part of the body, is the firſt view that naturally caſts up to us, when we turn our obſervations this way. Whether this is any peculiar action of the mind, or rather the natural concomitant of all its actions; as it makes the proprietor inexcuſable if he does not make the proper advantage of it, ſo it leads us even ſingly into ſuch conceptions of its nature, as ſets it quite above every the moſt ſubtile mechanical power, and even the moſt perfect animals; and gives ſuch a tincture of thought and reflection, even to ſuch ſenſations as the mind is purely paſſive in, as makes the effects of the animal machinery frequently paſs for thought and reaſon, and charges the mind with what it has no further concern with, than barely being aware that they are adoing; and by this means makes it

it very hard to diſtinguiſh between the effects of the active and merely paſſive parts of our conſtitution; and perhaps quite impoſſible to do it with any exactneſs and certainty, ſo as to ſay preciſely, where the mechaniſm ends, and proper ſpiritual activity begins. Both however become very evident in their further removes.

To begin with that which is the loweſt degree of activity, ſimple perception, or apprehenſion of the objects about us, or rather of the impreſſions they make on the animal ſyſtem, which is the only way they can be perceived by creatures of our conſtitution; not as if we were to imagine this ever ſubſiſts alone, without ſome reflection or judgement given concerning it, unleſs perhaps in very early infancy; but becauſe no judgement can be given on any thing until it is perceived, nor any diſtinct well founded one, until it is perceived clearly and diſtinctly: They are very juſtly conceived as different actings and operations as they are called; and as there are as many different perceptions as the material organs can be differently affected by the objects about us, ſo, when the organs of ſenſe are any how diſqualified or diſproportioned

diſproportioned to the objects about us, however near they may be, there can be no perception at all. The ſame thing happens where the impreſſions are too weak and faint, which begets only a confuſed apprehenſion of ſomething which they cannot diſtinctly perceive. Thus it happens in all thoſe caſes where the objects are either too minute and ſubtile, or at too great a diſtance, &c.

All theſe perceptions would vaniſh with the object, except perhaps ſo far as it influenced the animal mechaniſm, ſo as it ſhould take the ſame turn whenever the ſame, or a ſimilar object, was perceived; but during the intervals they would be of no uſe, and the preſent perceptions would ingroſs the whole of our attention, were it not for that power which is called the *memory*, where the ſeveral perceptions are regiſtered, and, as it were, kept in record. How this is done, and what part of it belongs to the mind, what to the body, men have attempted to gueſs; but as they know nothing of that part of the bodily machine concerned in it, they are not worth minding; nor would it be of any uſe to us if we did, any more than to know how the groſs

groſs aliment is converted into proper nouriſhment. In both caſes, the thing is done without, juſt as well as if we had, an intuitive knowledge of every movement. Experience and obſervation may lead us to all that lies in our power; and any thing further would trouble inſtead of ſatisfying.

Theſe perceptions thus recorded in the memory, are what learned men call *ideas*, and the old philoſophers *ſpecies*; both much of the ſame import, and taken from thoſe paintings which light makes on the eye by external objects, and thence improperly applied to the impreſſions which are made by them on the other organs, and by which they are diſtinguiſhed from one another. Much has been written about the nature, origin, and ſeat of them, to very little purpoſe; and, I am afraid, will be found to have more perplexed and embarraſſed, than promoted true and uſeful knowledge. The whole myſtery of them may, eaſily, and without any trouble, be reſolved into this ſimple natural view of the thing, that men can know nothing about any thing without them, but what they have ſome how or other perceived, and remember to have done; nor any further

than their conceptions were, and are remembered to be, clear, adequate, and diſtinct. Hence theſe perceptions, of whatever kind they are, muſt be the materials of all knowledge. Neither is it more poſſible to make new ideas, than it is to remember what one never had any perception of; or to amend them, but by trying to make our perception more perfect. Were every queſtion kept to this ſimple point, it might be hoped an end might be put to that chicane and intricacy which has over-run all ſcience; though, it is true, it would bring philoſophy and ſcience almoſt quite down to common ſenſe, and ſet the profeſſors of it more upon a level with the vulgar. But to return:

We obſerved before, that the moſt ſimple perceptions never ſtand alone in the human mind, being, beſides that conſciouſneſs which attends every action, always accompanied with ſome reflection or judgement upon it, which cannot be done without comparing them with ſomething or other. The firſt and moſt natural is, their relation to, and the effect they have, on the conſtitution, eſpecially as they are attended

attended with pleaſure or pain, and may be extended to all the conſequences of theſe; and, if they are conſiderable enough, are regiſtered in the memory, with their proper marks and characters of good or evil; and the like conſequences are concluded to attend them, whenever they are applied in the ſame manner.

But the mind does not ſtop here, but goes on to compare both the ſenſation, and what has occaſioned it, with all other things it remembers to have perceived. I ſay, with all other *things*: for it is not the ideas and ſpecies, or whatever one pleaſes to call that remembrance they have of what they have formerly perceived, but the *things themſelves*, as they have appeared, or now do, to them, by their ſenſible qualities, or by whatever other obſervations have been made of their latent powers, that the mind thus compares, and gives judgement upon. It is indeed but by the appearances of things we judge: but by theſe we judge of the things themſelves, and form thoſe conceptions of their nature and powers, that is, of the effects or conſequences they produce, either as they ſtand in nature, or are applied by art, and

the whole of their relations one to another, in which all our knowledge of them lies, and by which we are informed how to uſe them ſo as to make our advantage of them in every particular caſe.

As there are many things either too ſubtile or remote to fall directly under our obſervation, which yet we may be very nearly concerned in, and their effects very obvious; in like manner, there are many things ſo ſituated, that we cannot compare them immediately and directly, ſo as to form any correct and immediate judgement concerning them. This gives occaſion to another inſtance of the mind's activity, called *reaſoning*, the diſtinguiſhing character of the human ſpecies; whereby the ſeveral circumſtances are adjuſted by ſimilar ones in other caſes; ſo that by comparing one thing with another, ſuch as are unknown with ſuch as we diſtinctly perceive, we come at laſt to form ſome ſuitable conceptions of what otherwiſe could never have fallen under our obſervation. It is evident, however, that at the ſame time that this is one of the higheſt inſtances of the mind's activity and excellence, it is no leſs an inſtance of the imperfection of our conſtitution; as we

ſhould

ſhould have had no occaſion for it, could we have brought every thing we want to know directly under our obſervation.

Upon theſe is founded a further inſtance of the mind's activity and penetration, in claſſing the numerous huddle of objects, as they were perceived at different times and occaſions, as they appear to agree and differ in their properties, powers, or qualities, of whatſoever kind, either in their outward ſhape or known effects; and aſſigning every tribe its proper characteriſtic and mark, by which all the individuals belonging to that rank or claſs may be diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of another. Hence general names, and what they call *abſtract ideas*; concerning the nature and formation of which, ſtrange things have been ſaid, and a ſort of powers attributed to the mind, of doing what none of mankind could do, or ſo much as conceive poſſible to be done; whereas, we are ſure, the thing itſelf can be done as readily by the meaneſt peaſant as by the profoundeſt philoſopher.

In all theſe, and ſuch other inſtances, wherein the mind works only on material objects, and the feelings raiſed by the miniſtry

niſtry of the ſenſes, there is only a diſplay of ſome lower kind of powers, and foundation laid for more noble as well as more profitable employment. We obſerved before, that there was ſomething of conſciouſneſs attending every impreſſion made by outward objects, where yet the mind was as paſſive as the body itſelf. This is much more evident in the workings of the mind on the perceptions of theſe, and the ſeveral objects which occaſioned them; and affords a direct and intuitive knowledge of the whole of the procedure to every man who has patience and attention enough to obſerve it. There the mind becomes her own object; and, by the intuitive conſciouſneſs ſhe has of her actings and operations, ſhe comes to know, or rather feel, her own being, and thoſe perfections and powers ſhe is poſſeſſed of.

Theſe are the objects which commonly go under the name of *ideas from reflection*, to diſtinguiſh them from thoſe which certainly take their riſe from the ſenſes; which, without all queſtion, they are as different from, as the mind is from the body. And ſo far, indeed, they may go under the ſame name, as the remembrance may,

may, and ſhould, be more diſtinct of what paſſes in the mind. But when it is conſidered, that the perceptions the mind has of her own operations and actings, are not raiſed by the mediation of any, either external or internal, bodily organs, but the things themſelves are directly and immediately the object, it is evident there can be no ſuch thing as ideas or repreſentations of them; and indeed theſe actings being always at command to call up when one pleaſes, there can be no occaſion for any thing to ſupply their place: it muſt therefore be very wrong and inaccurate, to jumble them, by a common name, into the ſame claſs with things of ſo different a nature. It is true, indeed, that the mind, however pure and perfect a ſpirit it may be ſuppoſed, yet in all its operations acts not only in but by the body: its pureſt actings are always attended with certain corporeal motions, which produce feelings equally ſenſible as internal ones are; and which will be regiſtered and recorded in the memory along with the mental actings they are connected with. But here they are only attendants; while in the other they are the principal, or rather ſtand alone; until, from theſe, and the

the mind's improvement and management of them, we form the complex notion of thinking in general, with all its different modifications, perceiving, judging, reaſoning, willing, &c.

This leads us to conſider another power of the mind, the native iſſue of that improvement we juſt now mentioned, of her perceptions of external objects. By comparing one thing with another, and all together with herſelf, the impreſſions made on the ſeveral ſenſes are tried and adjuſted, the meaſures of pleaſure or pain balanced, and hence *judgement* is given concerning the true worth and value of the objects without us; by which new motions are raiſed in the animal ſyſtem, new paſſions and affections excited, many times directly contrary to thoſe occaſioned by the firſt impreſſions; and by which the active mind aſſumes the command of the whole man, and attempts at leaſt to make the man maſter of his own actions; unleſs he chuſes rather to continue a ſlave to blind paſſion and affection, and thus to live at random, driven, like his fellow-brutes, by every impreſſion that happens to be made on the material ſyſtem.

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That there is ſuch a power in man to control the native iſſues of external impreſſions, to ſuſpend and regulate the blind courſe of the paſſions, and even to raiſe and manage contrary ones, ſo as to command the whole animal ſyſtem, muſt be allowed by all who are not willing to have man degraded into ſomething even below the moſt part of animals; and greatly more miſerable than any of them; both as he is much worſe provided, having hardly any of thoſe ſalutary inſtincts which we find inlaid in the very conſtitution of moſt of them; and eſpecially, that they are not at all expoſed to thoſe keen remorſes, and the bitter anguiſh, we find ſo frequently following human actions.

Theſe ſame remorſes are certain indications that the man is conſcious of a power inherent in him, which, if duly exerted, might, and would, have prevented thoſe actions which give him ſo much diſtreſs. And to this alone can any appeal be made in theſe ſorts of queſtions. The powers of the mind can never be perceived but by the mind itſelf; nor will any man ever charge himſelf with what he could by no means prevent, any more than he can be

juſtly charged by another. And however a man may be *certainly* determined by a certain ſet of motives, rooted affections, and inveterate habits, he can never, with any tolerable propriety, be ſaid to be *neceſſarily* ſo; while he has it in his power, by applying the proper means, to overbalance, and even reprobate, theſe motives; to extirpate theſe affections and habits, and plant in their place ſuch as ſhall lead to a courſe of action directly oppoſite.

Without ſuch a power as this, all the reſt we have mentioned muſt be entirely ſuperfluous; as, on the contrary, the whole courſe of the mind's agency naturally leads to this ſingle point; which, if it is not attained, the whole labour of the mind, all the perceptions, compariſons, reaſonings, and judgements, that induſtrious and painful claſſing of things that affect us, and careful regiſtration of them, muſt be ſomething worſe than loſt. But, indeed, loſt they cannot be: for juſt as naturally as the mind, by theſe previous ſteps, prepares the proper objects, the pleaſure that attends them engages the heart, excites the proper affections and paſſions, and commands the whole executive powers; ſo that in time the man

man comes to purſue this new courſe with as much pleaſure and delight, under the influence of theſe new views and motives, as ever he did the higheſt gratifications of ſenſe. But of this we ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more fully afterward: what we have advanced here, is mainly deſigned to give a general view of the two great conſtituent parts of man, the animal ſyſtem, and the active ruling mind.

Whether the ſpirit which is in man could have ſubſiſted, and acted, ſeparately from all matter, we have no light to enable us to determine peremptorily, whatever reaſon we may have to believe that it may do both, without ſuch groſs bodies as ours are: but during the continuance of this preſent ſtate, we are well aſſured, that however it is the principal part, yet it is but a part of the man; and both body and ſoul are equally neceſſary to make up what we call the human conſtitution.

We are as much at a loſs to give any account of the nature of this union, how it is made at firſt, and by what means it is maintained and kept up, any further than that it is neceſſary the animal ſyſtem be complete in its internal frame, eſpe-

cially the more ſubtile and fluid parts, and that proper food and ſuſtenance is neceſſary to keep it ſo. One may be tempted to think, that matter receives here the higheſt refinement it is capable of, for fitting it for the human ſoul, the loweſt order of ſpirits, to unite with and act by. Nor will this appear ſo whimſical to ſuch as allow different kinds and degrees of purity and perfection among ſpirits, as there certainly are in matter; though all the degrees, both of the one and the other, may agree in ſome certain properties and powers.

But however the union is made, and perhaps it will be wiſeſt, as it is certainly ſafeſt, to reſt it on the inexplicable wiſdom and power of the great creator, the fact is moſt undoubtedly certain, and ſuch as every man carries the witneſs of in himſelf, in that mutual dependence which they are found to have on one another, both in their being, and in the exerciſe of all their powers.

When we propoſe to conſider the mutual dependence of the ſoul and body, with reſpect to their being, we muſt not be underſtood to mean the matter of the body or the very ſubſtance of the ſpirit. T.

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matter which compoſes the animal ſyſtem, no body doubts, was in being before there was any union with the active mind; and when that is diſſolved, there is not one atom of it annihilated. And however the ſubſtance of every ſoul may be ſuppoſed immediately created, though even that is what there is nothing can give us ſufficient aſſurance of, it is yet more unlikely that it ſhould be deſtroyed by the ſeparation: but however the ſubſtance continues after ſeparation, yet both muſt undergo ſuch changes, as that they ſhall no more poſſeſs the properties and powers which ſubſiſted during the union. The animal ſyſtem, we know, is entirely diſſolved, and its curious mechaniſm abſolutely deſtroyed; and though we cannot ſay what alteration is made in the ſpirit, yet, even allowing that it carries along with it the moſt refined and ſubtile parts of that matter it uſed to act by, it is ſtill but a part of man, ſeparate from its fellow; and therefore ſubſiſting and acting in a manner very different from its former manner during its union with the body; a ſtate evidently violent and unnatural.

The mutual dependence of the mind and animal ſyſtem, in their actings and operations,

tions, during the continuance of their union, as the knowledge of it is of more uſe to us, ſo of it we have much more certainty. As the body without the ſpirit would be but a dead lump of matter, or, at beſt, when fitted up into a ſyſtem, a mere brute; ſo, on the other hand, as the mind thinks, and exerts all its powers, not only in, but by, the body; were it not for the notices it receives by its organs, we have great reaſon to believe it would have nothing at all to think on; and as it has no direct intuition of its own ſubſtance, nor can know any more of its nature than can be gathered from its operations and actings, it muſt continue in a ſtate of ſtupid inactivity, without ſo much as being conſcious of its own exiſtence.

Certain it is, that man, in his firſt infancy, appears evidently a mere animal, and many degrees below moſt of them; minding nothing but what the animal inſtinct, a reſult of his conſtitution, puts him upon. Nor is there the leaſt appearance of thought or reflection, or any other evidence of a reaſonable ſpirit within, until the organs are ſtrong enough to receive and conv the feelings of external impreſſions. On

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theſe the mind begins to work, and in the ſame manner is continually ſupplied with materials. It is not until very late, that one can entertain ſo much as any apprehenſions of ſuch a being as a ſpirit, and yet later ere they can form any tolerable conceptions of its nature: and when it is conſidered, that we have no original impreſſions, nor any thing to form them upon, but what we can gather from the actings of our own minds, the model being ſo imperfect, a taint of material imagery runs through our moſt refined notions, which no abſtraction whatſoever can diveſt them of, unleſs we could form an idea of thinking without any object to think on.

But however that is, the ſenſible evidence we have of the mind's moſt perfect actings depending on the body, and the right conſtitution of the animal ſyſtem, puts the matter quite beyond doubt. We gave ſome hints before, of the influence which the ſeveral diſpoſitions of that ſyſtem have upon the paſſions and affections, and thereby upon the external actions, and conduct of life. Thoſe who will be at pains to obſerve it, will readily find it extending

tending further, not only to the memory, but to the judgement itſelf, and all the rational powers; and thereby affecting the mind, in the exerciſe, at leaſt, of her higheſt endowments. The ſeveral tempers, diſpoſitions, and habitual inclinations of mankind, will all be found owing to the ſame cauſe; nor can they poſſibly be altered, without altering the diſpoſition and movements of that part of the ſyſtem which occaſions them.

But nothing puts the mind's dependence on the body in a more conſpicuous and glaring point of light, than the caſe of thoſe who, from their birth, or very early infancy, have been deſtitute of any of the organs of ſenſe. Both reaſon and experience join to aſſure us, that no means whatſoever can enable the mind to form any conception of the objects which would have been eaſily perceived by their miniſtry. What then ſhould be the caſe of a man, if ſuch a man can be ſuppoſed, who never had any feeling, either external or internal? or wherein would he differ from a mere vegetable?

The influence of the mind on the body, though as hard to be accounted for, is

very way as real and obvious. For however ſome parts of the animal ſyſtem perform their proper offices, without any interpoſal at all of the mind, or ſo much as any conſciouſneſs that ſuch things are a-doing; yet every one knows he can move or reſtrain his tongue, or his hands, for inſtance, and employ them as readily at pleaſure, as he can think of any thing: nay, even the moſt ſpiritual actions of the mind, and ſuch as are moſt remote from any thing material, yet affect the body in a very ſenſible manner, mar digeſtion, exhauſt the ſpirits, and produce a wearineſs and indiſpoſition in the whole fabrick, even greater than the moſt toilſome labour, and in time wear it out more effectually.

We have another inſtance of this ſame dependence, though leſs obvious, yet rather ſtronger than that juſt now mentioned. It is taken from the influence which the affections of the mind have upon the body. I ſay, the affections and paſſions of the mind; not as if that was their proper ſeat, or that they ever can properly be called by theſe names while they continue there, and until the latent powers which command the executive ſyſtem are put in

motion: but however in multitudes of inſtances theſe ſecret ſprings are touched by the mechaniſm of material impreſſions and impulſes, it is not always ſo; and we find the very ſame ſymptoms produced, where no ſuch impreſſion could have been made, but by the intervention of ſome concluſion the mind had formed. Thus certain words and actions, which paſs unregarded by the man who underſtands not the meaning of them, ſhall raiſe another who does, to the higheſt degree of furious rage, more effectually than the ſmarteſt blows would have done without them. Nor are there any of the more refined affections, which confeſſedly take their riſe from the mind, that are not conſtantly attended with their proper correſponding motions in the animal ſyſtem.

There is another inſtance we have had frequent occaſion to hint at, wherein the power of the mind over the animal ſyſtem appears in its full ſtrength, viz. forming and altering at pleaſure what we call *habits* and *cuſtoms*, on which the whole of what is ſtyled *the manners of men*, and every part of their conduct, almoſt entirely depend. This will eaſily appear to be much

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above its having the command of ſome particular actions. Cuſtom or habit carries in it, not only a certain eaſe and facility in acting, ſo that the thing is done without any pain or reluctancy, but ſuch a proneneſs toward ſome particular way, that the man, as it were, naturally, and without thinking, falls into it. This is very apparent in common habits, ſuch as concern indifferent things; and, with ſome few exceptions, the whole buſineſs of education, good manners, civility, and politeneſs, nay, almoſt of all callings and profeſſions, ſtand on the ſame bottom. Whence the old true proverb, That cuſtom is a ſecond nature. Nothing is more common among men, than to alledge, they cannot bring their mind to this or the other thing, while yet they ſee, and readily acknowledge, it would be much better for them if they did. But the true cauſe will, in this caſe, be found to lie, not in the mind, but in ſome contrary habit; the whole animal ſyſtem is ſet another way, ſo that the heart is engaged in it; nor is every man maſter of ſufficient ſtrength of mind to reform, and turn it into another channel: and yet till that is

done, though it may be overpowered in ſome particular inſtances, yet it will readily return to its uſual courſe.

This whole affair will be better underſtood, by comparing the mind and animal ſyſtem in another view, viz. in the point of ſuperiority. And this again may be conſidered with reſpect to their excellency and natural worth; their authority and juſt power; and the actual power and influence they have over the human conſtitution in the conduct of life.

The ſlighteſt reflection that can be made on what has been obſerved, concerning the nature and actings of both, will leave no room to ſtate a competition, in point of excellency and dignity, even when our notions of the one are taken at the loweſt, and the other at the higheſt, unleſs they are abſurdly jumbled and confounded into one.

There can be as little diſpute on the point of authority and juſt power; as the grounds on which it is, or can be, founded, meet together in the mind; a ſuperiority of nature, fitneſs to command, and, what is equivalent to the moſt ſolemn inveſtiture, the good order and government, nay, the very being and happineſs of the whole,

whole, depend on the due ſubordination of the animal life to the direction of the mind.

We need not ſpend words on the natural ſuperiority of the active ſpirit in man, as it follows neceſſarily on that natural dignity and worth we were juſt now ſpeaking of; founded, as it is, in the activity of its nature, and the power it is poſſeſſed of, not only of continuing, but beginning, both thought and motion, and varying and modifying theſe at pleaſure. And if we carry our thoughts but a little further, to take in that thought and deſign with which its whole procedure is conducted, the corrections and improvement it makes on the intelligence received by the ſenſes, and the purpoſes it either does, or would, if it was not oppoſed, apply them to, for regulating the whole conduct of life to the beſt advantage, we ſhall hardly make any doubt of its fitneſs to command, and even that the good of the whole depends entirely on the abſolute ſubmiſſion of all the inferior powers to its deciſions.

Theſe, it is evident, carry in them ſomething above the ſtrongeſt preſumptions; and plainly enough declare the intention

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of the great author of our conſtitution. But if we will ſtill have further evidence, we need only turn our thoughts to another kind of dependence, viz. that which every man has on things without, whence he muſt be furniſhed with all the materials of enjoyment, and where his whole fund of happineſs lies; and upon an impartial ſurvey it will appear, that the mind is indeed, and muſt be, inveſted with all *rightful* power and authority; but in the point of *actual* power and influence, the competition is ſo ſtrong, as not only to bring it to a queſtion, which ſhall rule, but perhaps, in moſt inſtances, the lower ſyſtem carries it; the animal commands, and the man ſerves.

Man, with all the advantages his compoſition gives him over other animals, is yet the remoteſt that can well be imagined from a ſelf-ſufficient being. As he came into exiſtence without any concurrence, or even conſciouſneſs of his own, in a manner he knows not how, and by the contrivance and operation of certain powers he can give no account of; ſo, when he enters upon his exiſtence, he has nothing about him to ſupport it ſo much as a ſingle moment,

ment, until it is borrowed from abroad: ſo that, conſidered in himſelf, the beſt account that can be made of him is mere emptineſs, a creature made up of wants; yet ſo made, as that all theſe wants may be relieved, the emptineſs filled, and by this means the man grow up from the loweſt and moſt deſpicable beginnings, to ſuch a degree of perfection, that there is not an order of creatures ſo high that he needs to look on it with envy, and at the ſame time none ſo low, as that he can juſtly look upon it with contempt: and thus his loweſt ſtate of want and indigence, becomes not only the occaſion, but the proper means, of his perfection and glory; and is the only root on which they can be grafted, ſo as to arrive at any pitch of maturity. It is that very thing we call his capacity, which is larger or narrower, juſt in proportion to the feeling he has of his wants, and the largeneſs of thoſe appetites and cravings of proper ſupply.

At the ſame time it is to be obſerved, to the glory of the great author and contriver of the univerſal ſyſtem, that as, throughout the whole, one part exactly anſwers another; ſo, in relation to man, there is abundant proviſion made of every thing

thing neceſſary for his relief, and ſupplying every part of his emptineſs, to the utmoſt extent of the moſt enlarged capacity; and theſe laid, one way or other, ſo within his reach, that he may apply as much as he has occaſion for; and which he will be found, on juſt inquiry, to be exactly made for.

The numberleſs wants of mankind are all naturally reducible to two general heads, founded in the two conſtituent parts ſo often mentioned, the mind, and the body, or rather the animal frame: and as theſe are ſo different in their nature, they muſt have each of them their proper ſupply from their correſponding objects, of very different kinds; and therefore they are equally the concern of the whole man, where both are ſo cloſely united. Each of theſe may be properly ſubdivided into ſuch as are neceſſary for their ſubſiſtence, their improvement, and for providing a proper fund of pleaſure and enjoyment; by which the perfection and happineſs of the whole man may be carried on together.

What is neceſſary for the ſupport of ſpirits, how they improve, and wherein their proper enjoyments lie, we are but ill able to

to judge, ſo long as we are ſuch ſtrangers to their nature. We may be very ſure indeed, that all muſt be done quite in another manner, and by another ſort of means, than ſuch as are ſubſervient to the animal life; and if we may judge by the analogy there is between the two, it muſt be ſomething of the ſame nature, ſome ſpiritual thing; and whatever notion we frame of it, it will be found to lead up to the great father of ſpirits, the author and ſupporter of our beings. But until the human ſpirit is, by due culture, improved to ſuch a degree of perfection and capacity, as ſhall be in ſome meaſure proportioned to objects ſo much above its natural pitch, theſe will be looked on as unintelligible ſpeculations; or, if there is any reality in them, ſo remote, that few will think it worth while to mind them.

What concerns the animal life, as it lies much more obvious, ſo, on many accounts, it engages our attention more readily; and not without reaſon, as theſe things are not only abſolutely neceſſary to the ſupport of the conſtitution, but likewiſe the only poſſible means of improvement, as it is from thence materials are taken in,

and the foundation laid, for the moſt ſublime and ſpiritual exerciſes to which the mind itſelf can ever be raiſed. But, in the mean time, how to obtain the moſt agreeable nouriſhment for ſupporting and improving the animal ſyſtem, and what are called the comforts of life, how to ward off pain, and to purchaſe as much pleaſure as theſe ſorts of objects can ſupply, make up the main buſineſs of life.

As man is a compound of fleſh and ſpirit, united in the neareſt and cloſeſt manner, there ariſes from this union another ſort of wants, and enjoyments of a mixed kind; ſuch as a ſpirit diſengaged from matter could have no reliſh of, and which yet no mere animal can poſſibly come up to. Of this ſort are all the veſtiges of deſign and contrivance, in the beauty, order, and harmony, of the works of nature, and eſpecially the whole fabrick and furniture of the moral world, mens conduct and behaviour toward one another, with all the actions and paſſions of ſpirits dwelling in fleſh; from which the far greateſt part of the pleaſures and pains of a preſent ſtate take their riſe: And theſe are the pleaſures, and of this kind the buſineſs,

ſineſs, that are, by the bulk of mankind, reckoned the moſt refined and ſpiritual man can riſe up to; who, if they can acquit themſelves tolerably in the affairs of ſociety, conclude they have fulfilled all the duties of human life.

And here there is one thing deſerves our particular notice, that as there are multitudes, even of thoſe things which man is very capable of taking in, and improving, for his ſuſtenance and pleaſure, which yet may eſcape his obſervation; ſo long as they do ſo, the want of them gives him no manner of trouble, however ill provided he may be otherwiſe even with the bare neceſſaries of life; as we have daily inſtances, not only in infants, and the wild nations, but in all thoſe who have not yet learned to extend their wants of body or mind to ſuch boundleſs heights as they are carried in polite and learned ſocieties. But take the moſt contented ſavage, or common peaſant, you will need do no more to ſpoil his contentment, than let him ſee what he wants; or, which is much the ſame thing, increaſe his knowledge. Certain uneaſy feelings immediately ariſe, which either are, or immediately

diately produce, appetites, cravings, and ſuch importunate deſires, as give the man no reſt until they are ſatisfied.

The ſtate of mankind, and the advances he makes, from his early infancy, throughout the ſeveral ſtages of life, if carefully obſerved, would ſet the whole of what we have been pointing at in a very obvious light. The child cannot ſubſiſt a moment without air to breathe in, and but a very little while without proper food and ſuſtenance: when the calls of nature, thoſe feelings which go under the names of *hunger and thirſt*, are anſwered, all is eaſy and quiet, unleſs ſome impreſſion happens to be made on the under ſyſtem which occaſions pain. It is not until the organs of ſenſe grow up to ſome meaſure of ſtrength, that he diſcovers any taſte of pleaſure, or fondneſs, for ſuch things as afford it; but whenever theſe are obſerved, they are ſought after with great eagerneſs.

Thus, for a long time, pleaſure and pain are taken in only by the outward ſenſes; nor has the young thoughtleſs creature the leaſt notion of any other: and all this while the ſpirit is no more than a ſervant to the animal; and, in multitudes of men, continues

tinues in that ſubjection, perhaps, through the courſe of a long life, without ever engaging in any other, even thoſe of the mixed kind, any further than they can be made ſubſervient to ſome ſenſual gratification: and the whole buſineſs of the active principle is, to refine upon them, and, by varying and interchanging, to keep up the reliſh of life, as much as can be done by ſuch low and inadequate objects. Nor can there be ſo much as a competition, until the mind is ſufficiently inſtructed to exerciſe its proper authority, and can form ſuch a judgement of things, as ſhall make ſome kind of balance againſt ſenſe and feeling; and thus claim the command of the man, and the direction of his conduct.

There are two caſes, to which I believe all the reſt may be reduced, wherein this competition can happen. The firſt, when there are two or more objects of different value, though both of the ſenſual kind, and the loweſt, as very commonly happens, proves moſt grateful to the animal ſyſtem. The other, when the mind ſets up for itſelf, and promotes the purſuit of its own proper gratification, at the expence of ſome ſenſual pleaſure. And even among the

proper

proper pleaſures of the mind, ſome are more nearly allied to thoſe of the animal; others, and theſe the moſt noble, are more oppoſite to them. It is eaſy to ſee, in either caſe, what immenſe advantage the animal powers have over the rational: The heart is engaged; habits formed, and deeply rooted; the whole mechaniſm of the ſyſtem is formed upon the ſenſual way; and the mind, with all its activity, cannot command ſo much as a free thought, until the whole is turned a contrary way, and the affections and paſſions engaged on the oppoſite ſide.

As theſe ſame affections and paſſions are of ſo great moment in the human conſtitution, it will be neceſſary to take ſome more particular notice of them. We obſerved already concerning the riſe and ſpring of them, that they are no more than certain internal feelings, raiſed and carried on by ſome particular and appropriated movements in the more ſubtile and refined parts of the animal ſyſtem, tending, ſome with more, ſome with leſs violence, but all of them tending to immediate action. Nor does it make any odds whether theſe movements are excited and maintained

maintained by the mechaniſm of the external organs, or by the inward agency of thought and reflection; only the laſt are uſually more calm and ſedate; though, even in ſome of theſe, the mechanic powers break looſe from under the direction of the mind, and make no ſmall confuſion. A ſhort view of the ſeveral kinds of them, and of the manner in which they are or may be managed, ſo as to preſerve due order in the general ſyſtem, or ſtate of the human conſtitution, will anſwer our preſent purpoſe.

As theſe two names, *affections* and *paſſions*, are commonly uſed promiſcuouſly in our language, I know not whether it might not be deemed a ſuperfluous affectation of accuracy, to diſtinguiſh them; ſo as to appropriate the firſt to denote the original movements excited directly by the objects, which either immediately produce, or give the proſpect of pleaſure or pain, to the improvement or detriment of the conſtitution; and thence reckoned good or evil, tending to happineſs or miſery: and by the *paſſions* to denote thoſe occaſional movements made by the interpoſal of other things during the purſuit, which appear either to hinder or forward the main deſign.

ſign. It is evident, however, that the firſt are primary and direct; the other only ſecondary, and bearing ſome relation to the primary ones; without which there would be no place found for them.

Of the firſt ſort it is evident there can be no more than two; as there are only two ſorts of objects that can make any impreſſion on us, viz. ſuch as appear good or evil, advantageous or hurtful; or, to ſay all in one word, ſuch as pleaſe or diſpleaſe: for if there are any perfectly indifferent, they make no impreſſion at all, but paſs by without being at all regarded, or producing any affection whatſoever. Theſe, in their perfect ſtate, are well known under the names of *love* and *hatred*; but both admit of many degrees, and a multitude of different circumſtances; whence ariſe as many different movements. Some of them have particular names; others, though really different, have none, but are reckoned in with ſuch as have. But all of them, no matter what the objects are, further than as they pleaſe or diſpleaſe, from the loweſt inclinations and averſions to the higheſt pitch of delight and abhorrence, will be found to run into one or other of theſe radical ones.

The

The ſecondary affections, we took notice of, are moſt properly paſſions, ariſing moſt commonly on unexpected and unforeſeen oppoſition in the courſe of the primary ones; and anſwer very great purpoſes in their proper place. The principal of theſe is anger, in all the degrees of it, which is a violent effort of nature to remove the oppoſition; and accordingly puts the whole ſyſtem on the utmoſt ſtretch for that purpoſe. and were it not balanced by fear, raiſed by the appearance of danger, chilling the ſpirits, and weakening the powers of the ſyſtem, the world would be but one ſcene of confuſion. Anger diſappointed ſettles into reſentment; which is no more than that original paſſion, balanced with fear, and hid until an opportunity offers for revenge. Much of the ſame kind is ill-will, envy, &c. When a perſon ſteps between one and the enjoyment in proſpect, or when it is apprehended he will do ſo, anger begets jealouſy, emulation, &c. and the ſeveral degrees of theſe, according to the degree of eagerneſs or coolneſs in the purſuit.

There is another claſs of thoſe commonly reckoned among the ſecondary affec-

tions, viz. the movements occaſioned by the mind's reflection on the iſſue and event of her purſuits; and all of them attended with their diſtinct feelings in the animal ſyſtem. A probable or certain proſpect of ſucceſs, creates that ſtate we call *hope*, naturally attended with longings, expectations, &c. On the contrary, a probability, or even a poſſibility, of a diſappointment, begets fear; not that fear we formerly ſpoke of, but ſuch a concern as puts one upon all proper precautions for preventing the danger. If the diſappointment is certain, or apprehended to be ſo, it produces deſpair, and ſuperſedes all further endeavours. Succeſs in the purſuit and the poſſeſſion of the deſired good, begets joy, delight, complacency, &c.; until the enjoyment cloys, and ends in ſatiety, coldneſs, and many times averſion and hatred. If before ſatiety the enjoyment is loſt, then hope diſappointed brings ſorrow, grief, anxiety, and perplexity. There are no doubt many other circumſtances and correſponding movements, and many degrees of theſe, which have no names: nor is it material whether one knows them or not. The main thing we have to attend to, is the

the ſtrength of the impreſſion they make, and the influence they have on the animal mechaniſm, determining the courſe of he man's actions and behaviour.

There is another diviſion of the affections very much inſiſted on by the maſters of morality, taken from the relation they bear to, and the influence they may have on, ſociety, viz. into the private and public, or the ſelfiſh and benevolent kind; very well calculated, indeed, for anſwering certain purpoſes they have in view; but, at the ſame time, they do not appear to have any the leaſt foundation in nature. Not that the public or benevolent affections are not as much founded in the human conſtitution as the private and moſt ſelfiſh ones; but, for this very reaſon, there is not, nor can be, any natural foundation for making a diſtinction. It is true, indeed, what concerns one's private and peculiar pleaſure and happineſs, preſents itſelf firſt and moſt directly to the affections; yet where-ever the intereſts of the public appear more deſirable, and there are many ways of making them appear ſo, the man purſues them preciſely on the ſame plan of pleaſure, and is acting juſt as ſelfiſhly as he

did when he minded nothing but gratifying his taſte, or filling his belly. The object of his pleaſure is changed; and that is no more than happens every day: but until he finds his pleaſure in the thing, whatever it be, it neither is, nor can be, the object of his purſuit; and, on the other hand, whatever it be, or whence ſoever it comes recommended, whether from the animal feelings, or the dictates of the rational mind, if the impreſſion can be made ſtrong enough to pleaſe, ſo far as it does ſo, the heart, that is, the whole man, will certainly be engaged.

It is, however, in theſe natural inclinations, and the ſtrong connection that ſubſiſts between the ſeveral affections and paſſions, with their proper objects, that the great ſtrength of the animal life lies. And for this reaſon eſpecially, the maſters of the Stoic morality, finding them ſo troubleſome, and deſpairing of bringing them into a proper ſubjection to their ruling principle, propoſed eradicating them altogether, and ſubſtituting in their room thoſe rules of wiſdom dictated by the ſuperior mind; which they conceived were the

the only maxims whereby an intelligent being ought to be directed.

Nothing can be imagined more extravagant than this piece of philoſophical knight-errantry, as it is commonly underſtood: for beſides that theſe affections are as natural, and as much a part of the human conſtitution, as the moſt calm and deliberate judgements of the moſt exalted mind, they are, in their own place, every way as neceſſary. The wiſeſt and beſt-concerted determinations muſt prove abortive, unleſs the heart is engaged; and were it poſſible a ſenſe of duty could effect that thing, yet a man without affections could have no taſte nor reliſh of any thing, and conſequently no happineſs, even in the moſt exquiſite enjoyments.

But though they cannot be extirpated, yet regulated they muſt be; and perhaps this was all that was meant by their hyperbolical expreſſions: and indeed theſe natural movements, when authoriſed and directed by the mind, may, with greater juſtice, be called *actions* than *paſſions*; the informations given by the ſenſes being only the loweſt, groſſeſt, and moſt worthleſs objects in view; and theſe, very commonly,

monly, much miſrepreſented. What is pleaſing and delightful to ſenſe, may be very hurtful, and even deſtructive, to the man; and ſuch objects as appear the moſt horrid and frightful, may, upon the whole, be infinitely more eligible. It is the mind's province to examine, compare, and judge. Where theſe determinations are not regarded, as perhaps moſt frequently they are not, the conſtitution muſt be endangered, if not deſtroyed; and the man conſigned to an inſupportable remorſe, and often a too late repentance: ſo that indeed ſelf-denial, and mortification of the animal life, are the moſt natural duties, and abſolutely neceſſary to raiſe one the leaſt degree above the beaſts of the field.

But how theſe ſame unruly and tumultuous affections and paſſions may be reduced to their proper order, and kept in it, is the great queſtion. It will be very evident to thoſe who will be at pains to conſider it, both from the nature of the thing, and the general experience of mankind, that there are only two ways of attempting this with any ſucceſs, viz. balancing the paſſions, by playing one againſt the other, or by bribing them off with proper equivalents;

equivalents; and to one or other of theſe may be reduced all the attempts that ever have been made to any purpoſe for regulating the conduct of human life. In the firſt view, the main, and, in effect, the only ballaſt of the paſſions, are fear and hope. The fear of conſequences chills the ſpirits, and reſtrains the immoderate hurry of the animal movements; and thereby makes the purſuit more ſlow, and leaves more room for calm deliberation; while, in a ſimilar manner, hope guards againſt the bad effects of grief and diſappointment, and keeps the man from ſinking into ſullen deſpair. The other is every way as much founded in nature, and we have daily inſtances of it, in the changes men are every day making of the objects of their purſuit, and exchanges of what is called *the ruling paſſion*; or, to ſay the thing more properly, of the objects which ingroſs their affection, and deaden them to every thing elſe.

And now that I have mentioned theſe ſame ruling paſſions, it muſt be obſerved how much they contribute to the eaſe and quiet of mankind: For, if all men had the ſame object of purſuit, there muſt have

have been a continual interfering of intereſt, and ſcarce a poſſibility left of getting out of a continued ſtate of war, every man againſt every man; but now that men are diſtinguiſhed into certain claſſes, determined by their ſtations, circumſtances, and taſtes, and fixed by the conſtant character of their favourite affection, they may be friends with all the world beſides.

So long as the affection continues fixed on one object, the man's character is likewiſe fixed; and, from the knowledge of his views, one may ſay very poſitively how he will act in any particular caſe: but yet the paſſions, every one, even the moſt violent, may be either balanced or bribed off by more agreeable objects; and by this the whole conduct of the man altered. But it is not every ſuch exchange that gives the mind any advantage. Where the objects either of one's hopes or fears, or the pleaſures which induce him to the exchange, are of the ſame kind, the animal life may continue ſtill in its full ſtrength, as indeed happens in moſt of theſe exchanges.

Unleſs, then, the ruling mind have ſomething to offer which can outweigh all the

the pleaſures which blindly ingroſs the affections, they will continue their courſe, in ſpite of all reaſon and argument, whatever wiſhes or remorſes may riſe on ſome occaſions: *Video meliora, proboque; deteriora ſequor*; ſo that, in the event, the man will be juſt where he was. Moſt men imagine they have done the buſineſs, if they can fix their heart on ſomething above ſenſuality, and enter upon the pleaſures of the middle kind; and if they happen to fix on any of thoſe things which give the denomination of *public ſpirit* or *benevolence*, they are ready to imagine themſelves patriots, heroic ſpirits, and all the fine things that have been ſaid to flatter men into ſociableneſs and good neighbourhood.

But to take the true dimenſions of human perfection, we muſt carry our views above the pleaſures of ſociety as well as of ſenſe; and in order thereto, take in yet another and higher dependence every man has on the objects of the unſeen ſpiritual world; and there eſpecially upon the author of our exiſtence, the preſerver of our lives, and the great proprietor of all thoſe things we thoughtleſsly call ours, and pretend to the abſolute diſpoſal of. Nothing can be more

evident, than that if there is ſuch a being, it is ſomething above common folly to propoſe any thing like happineſs, ſo long as we are in any doubt about his favour and friendſhip; or ſo much as to ſurmiſe, that any enjoyment that can be found among his creatures may be brought into the loweſt competition with what is to be found in him. Until then the mind is furniſhed with ſatisfying views of God, and the joys and pleaſures of the unſeen world; the great, the only expedient, for reducing every affection and paſſion, muſt be wanting. An object this, which none can deprive another of, and the whole univerſe may ſhare in, without diminiſhing the enjoyment of one individual; in ſhort, the only chief good, vainly ſought after by the philoſophers, among his creatures.

When the mind, then, duly inſtructed and informed, ſurveys, according to its natural office, the whole compaſs of objects on which it has any dependence; conſiders what is good, and what evil; what is to be purſued, and what to be avoided; by what means, and in what order, they are attainable, and how to be enjoyed, and improved to the beſt advantage; the man either

ther is, or may be, as conſcious of the deciſion, and, we muſt ſay, with much greater certainty, than he can be of any of thoſe feelings received from external impreſſions of any kind. This is really the inward ſenſe of the man, and is the only piece of our knowledge which is abſolutely exempted from thoſe ſceptical ſubtilties which may be employed to intangle every other part: for let us be as ignorant as can be imagined of every thing without us, and indeed thoſe who know moſt are very ignorant, yet when one has carried his doubts as far as they will go, he can never queſtion the truth and reality of his inward feelings; and ſenſible he muſt be, on what occaſions, and in what degrees, he is pleaſed and diſpleaſed, ſo long as he is conſcious of his own being.

And as there is nothing a man can be ſo certain of, ſo there is not any thing more natural, and which is, or can be, a more direct and immediate reſult of the conſtitution, and more out of the man's power to direct or manage at pleaſure, hardly excepting the firſt and moſt original calls of the animal œconomy, and every way as eſſential and involuntary as the

feeling of pain or pleaſure. It is true, the mind may be diverted from conſidering and judging; but ſo may the eyes and ears, nay, the very natural appetites of hunger and thirſt; but without doing violence to the conſtitution, one can no more avoid the conviction of his mind, than he can avoid ſeeing light in broad ſunſhine, or feeling hunger and thirſt, when nature calls for proper ſupplies.

We might add what has been oftener than once hinted, and is a neceſſary conſequence of what has been ſaid on this ſubject, that until the mind examines, and gives judgement, the man is ſo far from being maſter of his own actions, that he is properly no agent at all, but is acted upon, toſſed hither and thither, by the animal powers, as mechanically, one may ſay, as a tennice-ball has its motions directed by the ſtroke of the racket. And until theſe convictions are ſo ſtrong, as to form all the powers of the ſyſtem upon them, he continues a ſlave; with this addition of miſery, that he finds the bitterneſs and anguiſh of his bondage; which, however, though a very bitter ſenſation, yet is a hopeful ſymptom, as it gives ſome ground

to

to expect, he will watch carefully every opportunity that may favour his eſcape.

But however natural and neceſſary it is, that the mind ſhould command all the inferior powers; yet when one conſiders the preſent ſtate of mankind with ever ſo little attention, they muſt ſee how great the ſtruggle muſt be, and how impoſſible, to form the whole ſyſtem into a regular ſubmiſſion, by one or two, or even a multitude, of faint attempts. This will appear very evident, if we will but attend to the very common caſe of contracted habits in the moſt indifferent things; ſuppoſe certain aukward and unnatural geſtures of body: how hard is it to break them off? and how inſenſibly does the man fall back into his former way, when he is ever ſo little off his guard? How much more, when habits, or inveterate cuſtoms, are rooted in one eſſential part of the conſtitution long before the mind is in any capacity of making the leaſt oppoſition; but, on the contrary, is diſpoſed to encourage and confirm them: eſpecially when, beſides all this, they are ſo much encouraged and ſupported by the way of the world about us, that even the mind itſelf, until better informed, is tempted

ed to give them its ſanction, and to conclude them natural and reaſonable? What ſtrength of mind, what care and watchfulneſs, are neceſſary, and, above all, what diligence, in the application of every mean that may contribute, either to ſtrengthen the mind, or to give weight to its dictates?

This ſtruggle is moſt diſcernible, where the inward ſenſe we ſpeak of, and the convictions of the mind, are ſtrong enough to balance the impulſes of the animal ſoul. Where theſe are weaker, in the ſame proportion as they are ſo, the ſtruggle ceaſes: but remorſes are frequent, in ſimilar degrees of ſtrength or weakneſs, until they are quite extinguiſhed, being overpowered by the vigorous exertions of the animal or mixed life. When, on the other hand, the man is ſo happy, as, by proper exerciſes of the rational powers, and calling in the proper aſſiſtances, to have his mind and ſentiments raiſed to ſuch a degree of ſtrength, as can eaſily overcome all oppoſition, the ſtruggle abates in the ſame proportion, until he arrives at that degree of perfection, which enters one upon the calm enjoyment of life, and

the happineſs which ſuits his conſtitution in all the parts of it.

This inward ſenſe of the mind, the impreſſions its dictates make upon the united ſyſtem, and their prevailing influence there, producing a ſuitable ſeries of actions in the conduct of life, though the ſame power originally, yet as it comes to be applied to different ſubjects, or taken in different views, goes under different names. When converſant about the regularity, beauty, and order, of material things, whether the productions of nature or art, diction and ſtyle, geſture and air, dreſs and ornament, and, in general, all the ſubjects of imagination, it is called *taſte*, and ſometimes *fancy*; when applied to the conduct of life, and as it forms the man upon the maxims proper on every occaſion and incident, it is very properly called *ſentiment*, as well expreſſing its true diſtinguiſhing nature, viz. the inward ſenſe and feeling of the man. When theſe things are enforced by the authority of the great creator and ſovereign, in whatever way this may be ſuppoſed to be known, it commonly bears the name of *conſcience*, and carries the higheſt influence; and from the evidence and conviction that attends

tends it, it is called *one's light*; by which, accordingly, both one's own conduct, and that of others, is juſtified or condemned.

According then as mens affections and paſſions fall under the influence of the animal impulſe, or the direction of the active mind, their actions are formed upon them, and the conduct of life determined into a certain courſe, which is called *their manner*; that is, in plain Engliſh, the cuſtoms they follow: at firſt but ſingle actions, aukwardly performed, but which, by frequent repetition, become eaſy, agreeable, and ſuch as one readily falls into, even without thought or reflection, hence called *habits*; which is only another name for inveterate cuſtoms: for in that light it appears the firſt authors of human language conſidered them; and, by what has been ſaid, every body who underſtands them will do ſo ſtill.

Into this, then, the whole buſineſs of *moral virtue*, as it is called, muſt be reſolved, namely, That the courſe of mens actions, i. e. their manners, cuſtoms, habits, or whatever they may be called, be conducted into a thorough conformity unto the dictates of the mind; and the ſentiments of

of the heart formed, not on bare appearances, but on true judgement of the real worth and excellency of the ſeveral objects upon which the man's happineſs or miſery depends. And, for the ſame reaſon, and with the ſame propriety of ſpeech, the contrary courſe might be called *moral vice*, had not cuſtom conſecrated certain words and phraſes, which thoſe who know not the meaning of them, ignorantly take up, and ſuperſtitiouſly amuſe themſelves and others with, to the perverting of truth, and diverting their minds from matters of infinitely greater moment.

We only obſerve, how juſtly this regular conduct of human life was peculiarly honoured by the men of the firſt ages with the name of *wiſdom*, and continued to poſſeſs that diſtinguiſhing name, until the knowledge of the objects without which it could not ſubſiſt, being loſt, the whole of it was reduced to the uncertainty of conjecture and opinion; and the moſt the wiſeſt could pretend to, was to be a lover of wiſdom. Hence philoſophy became a ſort of profeſſion, which, hard to ſay whether from heedleſsneſs or deſign, has continued to uſurp the honours due only to true wiſ-

dom, even where that, in the higheſt meaſures of it, was revived and acknowledged.

It is likewiſe to be obſerved, that all the foundations of moral goodneſs aſſigned by later maſters, naturally run into this inward ſenſe of the mind; and however ſeemingly remote, and even oppoſite, they may appear, yet all that have any ſolidity in them, reſolve into this, and there amicably unite. Thus we ſee, that moral goodneſs is founded in the nature of things; in truth; in the beauty, order, and harmony of the univerſe; that it is juſt and right, beautiful and pleaſant, honourable and gainful, &c.: but all this we ſee, not directly and immediately, but by the intervention of proper *ſentiment*; the perception and judgement of the mind forming the whole human ſyſtem upon theſe views, which could never have made the leaſt impreſſion without it. Nay, *in this*, even the two oppoſite ſyſtems of ſelf-love and public affection, ſo earneſtly contended for, amicably unite, and mutually ſupport and aſſiſt each other. While vice, on the other hand, is the native iſſue of darkneſs, ignorance, and error; it is folly, madneſs, deformity; and, in the event, as de-

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ſtructive and ruinous, as, in the whole of its courſe, it is unnatural and brutiſh.

It would ſeem likewiſe, that this muſt be the ſame with what has of late made ſo much noiſe in the world, under the name of the *internal* and *moral ſenſe*; as it certainly muſt be, if theſe words have any meaning at all: but then they who affect ſuch terms muſt be egregiouſly miſtaken in their notions, when they talk of this internal and moral ſenſe as ſomething, not only diſtinct from, but prior unto, all judgement and reaſoning; yea naturally implanted in man as a part of his conſtitution, and a more infallible guide than any obſervations fallible man can make: whereas nothing can be more evident, than that in the ſtate in which all mankind are born, there neither is, nor can be, any ſuch thing as either taſte or ſentiment, until they are ſome how or other formed by experience and obſervation.

I ſaid *ſome how or other*; becauſe there are many ways of forming the taſte, ſentiment, and even conſcience itſelf, beſides a true knowledge of things, and a deliberate judgement concerning them. Both reaſon and experience aſſure us, that not only children, but the bulk of mankind, may be

brought to love or hate, purſue or avoid, almoſt any thing, with the greateſt force of bigotry; that the impreſſions of ſenſe firſt, and then the example and way of the world, are with moſt the only ſtandard: and when the bulk, even of thoſe who value themſelves on their taſte and ſentiment, can aſſign no better ground, the whole may be ſaid to reſt upon mere caprice and fancy. And, therefore,

Since there may be ſuch things as falſe taſte, wrong ſentiments, and erring conſciences, as well as thoſe which are true and juſt; and as the firſt will produce as quick and vigorous effects of approbation and diſlike; nay, for very obvious reaſons, much ſtronger and more violent than the laſt: it muſt be abſurdly wrong, to reſolve the morality, as it is called, or the right and wrong, the good and evil, of human actions, ultimately into any inward taſte or ſentiment; which, if it has not a ſtandard in truth, and the nature of things, or is not founded there, muſt be the moſt ſlippery, fleeting, fanciful thing, that can be imagined.

If any one wants to be reſolved how the mind of man comes by ſuch a ſway in the human conſtitution, as in this manner to form

form the whole complex ſyſtem upon its dictates; this, no doubt, is originally owing to the wiſe conſtitution of its great author, who has made this the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of this tribe of his creatures. But this being ſuppoſed, one needs no more to ſatisfy himſelf how it is, or may be, effected, than to reflect a little on what has been ſaid concerning the riſe and ſpring of all human actions, viz. the affections and paſſions; how theſe are raiſed and maintained, and thereby the whole united ſyſtem put into that tendency to action which we call *the will*, by certain impulſes and movements on the moſt inward and ſubtile parts of it, which naturally iſſue in the proper effects, and ſuch a peculiar courſe of action. No body has any difficulty about conceiving how this may be done by material impulſes on the organs of ſenſe, which all lead to, and land in theſe. When it is then remembered, how the mind retains, recalls, and improves, theſe ſame original perceptions, and how intimately ſhe is connected with the material ſyſtem in all her operations and actings, we will eaſily apprehend how the ſame kind of movements muſt be produced. For as that active principle has at command

command all the perceptions ſhe has in remembrance; and, by comparing and conſidering theſe, can form out of them images and repreſentations of what the ſeveral different compoſitions might produce: ſo ſhe can employ theſe at pleaſure for producing motions of the ſame kind, and directed preciſely in the ſame manner, as the outward impreſſions made by the objects themſelves would have done. And thence it is, that theſe ſort of impreſſions made by the mind's repreſentation of proper objects, of whatſoever kind they are, very properly bears the name of *motives*; calmer indeed at firſt, and not near ſo impetuous, as thoſe excited by ſenſible impreſſions; but by being often repeated, as the mind can repeat them at pleaſure, they come to produce the effect with as much certainty, and in time engage the heart, and form the executive ſyſtem into a courſe of action, which nothing but giving way to contrary impreſſions can break off. All which we may daily find in ourſelves, and obſerve in others, fully exemplified in the changes that are made in mens taſte and ſentiments, or what they call the *ſtate of*

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their mind, throughout the ſeveral ſtages and different circumſtances of life.

From what was juſt now ſaid concerning theſe movements, which either are the ſame thing with what we call the will, or immediately and directly produce it when arrived at a certain pitch; and in which the concurrence of the whole man lies, whether the mind engages the material ſyſtem, or the animal powers overcome and ſubdue the mind; a queſtion has been moved concerning the force or effect of theſe motives which ſet them agoing, and the certainty one may have of ſucceſs in the application of them. This has been carried ſo far, that ſome ſeem to ſay, the event in this caſe is either altogether, or very near, as certain, as the determination of the motion of one parcel of matter is by the impulſe of another. What ſeems to be the natural conſequence of this, is, that man can be no free agent, or rather no agent at all, every action of his being certainly, i. e. neceſſarily, determined into a certain courſe, which it is impoſſible for him to avoid. Others will needs have the man poſſeſſed of a certain power, by which he can, if he will, act contrary to the ſtrongeſt

eſt and moſt effectual motives and excitements. Whence have ariſen thoſe intricate, and moſt of them unintelligible diſputes, concerning liberty and neceſſity, the freedom, indifferency, and ſelf-determining power of the will, and other ſuch metaphyſical wranglings, of which there is no proſpect of ever ſeeing an end.

Were we able to look into the mechaniſm of the animal ſyſtem, and could give an exact account of all the ſeveral movements it is capable of; could we exactly compare and balance the ſeveral powers and forces of outward impreſſions among themſelves, and all of them with the inward ones made by the mind, with their ſeveral connections and dependencies; there might be ſome hopes of determining the queſtion with ſome certainty from that quarter. But as there can be no expectations thence, we muſt content ourſelves with ſuch light as plain facts, atteſted by obſervation and experience, can afford; and which may abundantly anſwer all the purpoſes, even of a perfect intuitive knowledge.

We will not ſtop to make remarks upon the ſeveral kinds of motives; which are, or may

may be, just as numerous as the things we have any connection with or dependence on; which we have already taken some notice of; how some directly affect the body, others the mind, while there are some likewise that affect the whole system. The weight and moment of them all depends entirely on the measure of pleasure or pain they are capable of giving. The following facts may satisfy a modest inquirer. And, in the first place, we are sure,

That no motive whatsoever has any influence until it is perceived; nor any further than the force of it is perceived; that is, until it has made its impression. The thing may be known in theory; but the difference is as great, as perceiving a sword at a distance, and feeling it pierce one's body. Hence, the strength or force of a motive, that is, its power to produce the designed effect, cannot be known, until the effect of it is felt within; and that can never be done, until the movements are at least begun, and the affections in some degree formed.

It is certain also, that no motive, or set of motives, operate equally on all men; nor even on the same man at different times,

and in different ſituations of mind, as we commonly expreſs it, but only as the general ſyſtem happens to be diſpoſed at the time.

For the ſame reaſon, it frequently happens, that the loweſt motives have their full effect, when the higheſt and moſt noble make no impreſſion at all; ſenſe is for the moſt part too ſtrong for reaſon; preſent objects, though not able to bear a compariſon in other reſpects, are generally preferred to ſuch as are at a diſtance, either in time or place.

It is notwithſtanding true, that every motive will ſucceed, of whatſoever kind it is, unleſs the force of it is deſtroyed, and its operation marred, by contrary ones. And, on the other ſide, the operation of any motive, however far advanced, may be deſtroyed by a contrary impreſſion, provided it is ſtrong enough to excite a contrary motive of equal or ſuperior force.

From all which, and ſuch other obſervations, it will appear, that human liberty, the true freedom of man, does not, cannot, lie in his being exempted from the influence of every motive; which indeed is a caſe that cannot poſſibly happen. The firſt perception ingroſſes the whole

whole man; and certainly will keep poſſeſſion until driven out by another. And however one may be indifferent to ſome things which do not affect him either way, it is impoſſible he can be ſo upon the whole; and by the prevailing impreſſion, whether from the mind or ſenſes, he will be determined. Perhaps a way of ſpeaking which has prevailed much among ſcholaſtic men, aſcribing the will to the mind as peculiarly its province, may have miſled ſome into the other conceit; which will very quickly be deſtroyed, by a reflection which every thing we meet with will confirm, that the mind not only dwells in the body, but acts by its powers.

Again, let the effects of the ſeveral motives be as certain and neceſſary, as any, or all, the laws of mechaniſm can make them; ſo long as they are under the management of an agent, who can balance the overbearing powers of one with thoſe of a different kind, and even deſtroy their operation altogether, by rejecting them, and ſubſtituting others in their room, the freedom of the agent ſuffers nothing at all; and he is to all intents and purpoſes anſwerable for every one of their effects, un-

leſs, after having uſed all means in his power for ſubduing the rebel affection, it proves too ſtrong for him. This, I believe, is a caſe that never happened with man; but, however, it points out to us the proper inquiry for determining the queſtion, viz. How far the human powers, and particularly the ſovereignty of the mind over the animal ſyſtem, extends? And here, indeed, it will be found, that in moſt men it reaches but a ſhort way: not from any defect in the mind itſelf, or of any of its natural powers; but for want of due culture and improvement, and the proper means and exerciſes requiſite to raiſe it to that degree of ſtrength and activity, which is neceſſary for the effectual diſcharge of the offices belonging to the place it holds in the human conſtitution.

We obſerved elſewhere, that, of all beings within the compaſs of our obſervation, the human conſtitution is moſt capable of improvement; and what an immenſe odds there is between an infant, or even a wild man, and a great genius cultivated to the higheſt perfection. What the Stoics aſſerted of their wiſe man, That he only is free, and all the reſt ſlaves, will be

be found to hold very certainly, however it has been looked on as a paradox. In all the lower degrees, ſo long as the mind is intangled and overpowered by the animal feelings, until it has the perfect command of the ſyſtem, and the whole man is engaged, not only in the purſuit, but alſo the enjoyment of ſuch pleaſures as perfect wiſdom will juſtify, there muſt be ſomething amiſs in the conſtitution; ſome rebellion fomented in the inferior powers; ſomething, in a word, the man cannot approve of; and therefore ſome conſtraint, bondage, or at leaſt ſome defect of that freedom and liberty which is neceſſary to conſtitute a perfect and a happy man.

Upon the whole, then, we may be able to form ſomething of a juſt notion of the human conſtitution; and thence form a true judgement of what is *natural* and *unnatural*; words which have been ſhamefully abuſed, to palliate, not only the ſilleſt pleaſures, but ſome of the moſt enormous villanies. It may be juſtly enough reckoned trifling to obſerve, that the conſtitution of any thing is not any one part, however eſſential, taken ſeparately; when it is ſo evident, that it takes in all the parts united;

and

and united in that very order and ſubordination of one part to another, which conſtitutes this peculiar order of beings, and diſtinguiſhes it from all the reſt. But is it not as trifling to ſay, that any pleaſure, or piece of human conduct, is natural, becauſe it is agreeable to ſomething that belongs to the conſtitution, when it is utterly inconſiſtent with the happineſs of the whole, and directly oppoſite to the natural dictates and tendency of the moſt noble part, and ſuch as the conſtitution requires ſhould have the leading? However natural, therefore, it is, that mankind ſhould be firſt under the influence of animal impreſſions, which will be found all of them harmleſs, until the mind is or may be improved into ſuch meaſures of ſtrength, as to regulate and control them; it becomes the moſt unnatural thing that can be well imagined, for one to continue in a paſſive ſubjection to them; as it would be, on the other hand, for any to indulge themſelves in what they take to be the proper buſineſs of ſpirits, to the entire neglect of the other eſſential part of their frame, and without which they cannot be men, but ſome different kind of beings.

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The ſame will hold throughout all the degrees of advancement toward perfection; as indeed they are beyond a poſſibility of being numbered with any exactneſs. The moſt remarkable of them are marked out, either by the objects which engage the affections, or by the different kinds and degrees of the affections and paſſions themſelves. Thence are taken the characteriſtics of the ſeveral claſſes of mankind, according as the ſeveral ſorts of animal pleaſures, or thoſe of the mental and ſpiritual kind, viz. ſenſuality, luxury, ambition, and covetouſneſs, on the one hand; or, knowledge and learning, religion and devotion, on the other, happen, in the ſeveral degrees of each, to take the leading of the man, and to influence his actions. To reſt in any of the lower meaſures, ſhort of that perfection which the conſtitution admits of, and is fitted to riſe up to, muſt be in the ſame degree unnatural: however juſtly it may be called natural in another ſenſe, as it denotes the courſe and way which men moſt readily fall into, by the prevailing of the animal part at their firſt ſetting out in the world.

Hence likewiſe one may be enabled to account for the many glaring inconſiſtencies,

ſiſtencies, and even palpable contrarieties, which are to be found, not only in different men, but even in the ſame man in different circumſtances, as the animal or the mind takes the direction; and likewiſe for what is greatly more unaccountable, that vanity and ſelf-approbation which are ſo very common among the lower claſſes of mankind, the native ſpawn of ignorance and inattention. The great variety of contrary impreſſions from ſo many different objects, muſt render man the moſt fickle inconſiſtent being, and at the ſame time the moſt miſerable, haraſſed and torn aſunder, as he is, by ſuch a multitude of different appetites and paſſions. Every change promiſes relief, and feeds his vanity, while he knows no better, with the proſpect of reſt and ſatisfaction at laſt; and thus he goes on, until either death cut him ſhort in the unfiniſhed purſuit, or, which is but a rare caſe, experience and diſappointment drive him into juſt and proper ſentiments, and ſettle him in the calm purſuit and enjoyment of the adequate object of his happineſs; where his reſtleſſneſs and vanity receive a final and full cure at the ſame time.

And here it is,—in the juſtneſs of ſentiment,

ment, and in the perfect conqueſt of all the powers of the animal life into a thorough ſubjection to the rational mind, that we are to look for the true ſtandard of human perfection, viz. ſuch as the human conſtitution will admit of, (which perhaps was the meaning of thoſe philoſophers who made the nature of the ſoul to conſiſt in harmony), when the whole complex ſyſtem is perfectly united in a due ſubordination of all its parts, according to their ſeveral degrees of dignity and uſefulneſs, and formed into a regular and uniform courſe of action; and the proper intereſts of every part ſecured in the general good of the whole, and the enjoyment of its proper life. This, it is evident, can never be done, until ſuch time as the ruling power is ſufficiently inſtructed to give a ſatisfying deciſion of the only important queſtion that lies before mankind, viz. What is that *good* in the enjoyment of which man's true happineſs lies? and how is it to be attained? and till it give this deciſion with ſuch evidence and authority as ſhall engage the heart, form the ſentiment, and thereby the whole courſe of the affections upon it, ſo as every other thing ſhall be regulated and kept in

its proper degree of ſubordination by it.

By this, then, we may be likewiſe enabled to judge, what muſt be the proper culture of ſuch a being as man is; and how he muſt be raiſed, if ever he is, to his proper degree of perfection. There are innumerable pretenders ſoliciting, all of them promiſing pleaſure and happineſs; and the moſt worthleſs of them, as commonly happens, are the moſt importunate; and, taking the advantage of our ignorance and prepoſſeſſion, make the moſt vigorous attacks upon the heart, and commonly the moſt ſucceſsful. On theſe, even the leaſt and loweſt of them, the taſte and ſentiment may be very ſtrongly formed. Nothing leſs than a thorough acquaintance with the whole fund of enjoyment, or what one may call *the materials of pleaſure and happineſs*, at leaſt the beſt and moſt valuable of them, can enable the mind to adjuſt the ſeveral pretenſions, to rectify miſtakes and wrong ſentiments, and to give the preference where it is due. The only way, then, to improve the mind, muſt be, to increaſe its knowledge, by bringing under its obſervation whatever may merit its regard.

regard. Every new object we have any connection with, makes us ſenſible of new wants we were not at all ſenſible of, enlarges the capacity, and gives a taſte of pleaſure, which we neither had nor could have before we were acquainted with it. Every ſtep of advancement, by opening and enlarging the mind, prepares for another; and thus keeping it continually on the progreſs, prevents its ſettling into any ſuch habit as uſually produces an obſtinate bigotry; which indeed would effectually put an end to all further improvement.

To trace then the riſing mind, from its very low beginnings in the firſt ſenſations, when the poor creature is hardly conſcious of its own being, through the great variety of external and internal impreſſions and motives, from objects without, and the workings of the active mind within; the multitude of different movements, affections, and paſſions, occaſioned and produced by theſe, and the continual ſtruggles between the rational and animal powers; to mark out the ſeveral ſteps of improvement and progreſs toward perfection; the ſtate of mind or ſentiments peculiar to each; how they are formed and altered,

until they arrive at the proper ſtate for taking in and improving the higheſt enjoyment: this is the proper employment of man; and which will be found to comprehend all that is worth knowing.

ESSAY III.

Of Human Knowledge, its nature, extent, and uſe.

KNowledge is to the mind what light is to the eye; and it is equally impoſſible and needleſs to attempt a definition of either. Thoſe who have experienced it, need none; and thoſe who have not, cannot, by the moſt elaborate account that can be given of it, ever be brought to any conception of what it really is. It is indeed the inward light of the mind; and, at the ſame time that it makes every thing viſible ſo far as it reaches, inſinuates itſelf with a ſecret, but moſt diſcernible, conſciouſneſs, enabling the man to order the whole buſineſs of life with eaſe and pleaſure,

ſure, which otherwiſe would all lie involved in darkneſs, confuſion, and diſorder.

When we ſpeak of human knowledge, we muſt be underſtood to mean, not only the meaſure and degree, but that particular kind of it, attained and managed in ſuch a manner, and by ſuch means, as are ſuited to the conſtitution and make of a being ſo circumſtanced; and deſigned by the great creator to anſwer ſuch purpoſes; and by which he is diſtinguiſhed from all other beings, both above and below him. No body looks for vegetation in a ſtone, nor local motion in a plant or tree; from the moſt perfect mere animal, we do not expect thought or reflection: every jot as unreaſonable it is, to imagine man ſhould underſtand, and act, in the ſame manner that ſpirits exempt from matter do; or, if there are any ſuch, that act in bodies of a more ſubtile contexture, or organs different from ours. Every created being is confined to certain bounds, which it cannot paſs over without ceaſing to be what it is, and entering into another order; and to theſe all the exerciſes, even of its moſt noble powers, muſt be limited.

And yet no being whatſoever, and man leaſt

leaſt of all, has any reaſon to complain, unleſs he is diſpleaſed that he was not made an angel: and had he been ſo, on the ſame grounds he would have the ſame reaſon to complain, that he was not made a god. His preſent frame, capacity, and powers, are all ſuited to his ſituation, and the place he holds in the univerſe, with the purpoſes he is deſigned to anſwer there. Were his body more ſubtile, his ſenſes more acute, or even his mind more detached from his body, and independent on its influence, one may be very ſure he would loſe greatly more than he could gain, and become ſo much leſs able to bear his preſent place of reſidence. As he is, he is fitted to anſwer all the purpoſes of life, and is completely provided, in the due uſe of the powers he has, for attaining ſuch meaſures of knowledge, and thereby riſing up to a ſtate of ſuch dignity, as ſhall ſet the higheſt order of created beings very much below his envy.

But as the whole of his ſucceſs depends on the right improvement of the powers he is endowed with, it muſt be of great moment to be well acquainted with the nature and extent of theſe powers, that he may neither

neither ſpend his ſtrength in fruitleſs ſtretches after what is beyond his reach, nor ſtop ſhort of his allotted perfection, by indulging an indolent deſpondency; both equally unnatural, and prejudicial to the conſtitution. This we cannot pretend to make any judgement of, without conſidering ſomewhat the objects we have to deal with; the ſeveral ways by which we do, or may, become acquainted with them; and how far they may, in ſuch views as man can attain of them, be improved for anſwering the higheſt and moſt valuable purpoſes in life.

The objects of human knowledge are really paſt numbering, if they may not be called infinite; as they include every thing that can by any means be brought under our obſervation, till we aſcend even to the immenſity of the original being; ſo that to give any tolerable account of them, may, to an uncultivated mind, ſeem quite impracticable: and this perhaps is the reaſon, why the bulk of mankind never ſo much as attempt to reduce the objects of their thoughts into any tolerable order, but take them at random, as they happen to caſt up, or as their preſent occaſions require. By this means, the mind, intangled

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as it is in inextricable confuſion, becomes utterly incapable of any regular improvement, and loſes all the advantage that might be made of what lies ſo fairly before it.

This ſort of confuſion is the more inexcuſable, that things are not thrown before us in a confuſed huddle or random heap, but diſpoſed by their all-wiſe former into the exacteſt and moſt beautiful order, diſtributed into certain ranks and claſſes; ſo that however innumerable, and beyond human comprehenſion, the individuals may be, yet one may with great eaſe, and without any uncommon meaſures, either of ſagacity or application, attain ſuch diſtinct views, as may anſwer all the purpoſes of human life.

We have already had occaſion to obſerve, how the whole univerſe of beings may be reduced under two great diviſions, viz. ſuch as are purely paſſive, and cannot ſo much as move, much leſs act, in the loweſt degree, but as they are moved or impelled, nor in any other manner than that impulſe directs them; and ſuch as are capable of beginning, continuing, varying, and directing both thought and motion at pleaſure, ſo far as their powers go. The

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firſt we call *matter*, the other *ſpirit*; which are commonly, and not without ſome foundation, conceived and ſpoke of as two diſtinct worlds, the *material* and *ſpiritual*. Between theſe, and compounded of both, as they are united in man, we obſerved the riſe of another, diſtinct from both, and of a conſtitution entirely different from either of them taken ſeparately, which is well known under the names of the *rational* or *moral world*, and ought by no means to be confounded with either of the other two.

The external material world, as it is the proper object of that ſort of knowledge which is taken in by the external ſenſes, is moſt early obſerved; and the animal part of the man is ſo framed, that as it cannot ſubſiſt a moment but by the aſſiſtance of ſome portions of it; ſo, where the ſenſes are entire, it is impoſſible that it can long eſcape his notice: though at the ſame time it will readily be allowed, that many parts of it lie too remote, and much of that which lies neareſt us, is too minute and ſubtile, for human obſervation: but thoſe which are obſerved do in a manner ingroſs the whole attention of mankind.

The whole univerſe of matter is again divided obviouſly into two parts; the *heavens* and the *earth*; very unequal indeed in themſelves, but not ſo much ſo to us, who being confined to this earth as our habitation, have almoſt all our buſineſs here. What can be of real uſe to us in the remoteſt part of the heavens, lies obvious enough to obſervation; and accordingly has been improved, and probably may be yet more, for anſwering divers valuable purpoſes: but as man was never deſigned to be either a maker or governor of worlds, he can ſuffer no loſs by having the ſecret mechaniſm of the heavens hid from him. Nor is it any wonder it ſhould, when the animal mechaniſm of his own conſtitution is ſo much ſo. It is earth, fire, air, and water, that man has moſt to do with, which lie all at hand; and this perhaps was the true reaſon why the men who called themſelves *philoſophers*, in former times, made theſe the elements of all material bodies. The general diviſion into animals, vegetables, and dead matter, is as obvious. The ſeveral kinds of animals, inhabitants of earth, air, and water; the different tribes of plants and trees;

trees; the ſeveral ſpecies of earths, ſtones, minerals, &c. with their ſeveral uſes, make the ſubject of the moſt uſeful, as well as entertaining, ſtudy, viz. that of natural hiſtory.

The world of ſpirits will be acknowledged, by all who believe there are any ſpirits, to be as much above the moſt refined, and curiouſly organized matter, as active power, a power to excite and modify thought and motion, and to conduct both with counſel and deſign, is preferable to the fineſt machinery; nay, as the great creator and former of all things is preferable to his own work. Thoſe neareſt us, and which every man has the beſt, and indeed the only immediate acquaintance with, are our own minds, the ſpirit which every man has within him: and however, by that vail of fleſh which every man carries about him, he is cut off from all direct and immediate communion with all the other orders of ſpirits, and cloſely connected with the material world; yet is he not confined there, but has a way left him by which he may attain the knowledge and acquaintance even of the Father of ſpirits; and thereby acquire a capacity

and fitneſs for another way of living, without that dependence on ſenſe and bodily feeling, which we have in our preſent ſtate, for the moſt ſpiritual parts of our knowledge and enjoyments.

The mixed world we mentioned, made up of the actions and paſſions of ſpirits dwelling in fleſh, is the great, and in effect the only, medium, by which one can be enabled to attain this excellent ſtate of life. It is indeed a kind of low image, that is, an image ſuited to our preſent low condition, of the ſtate of the ſpiritual world; and as it may be, and in fact frequently is, entirely detached from it, or, which is the ſame thing, from him who is the ſubſtance of it, the great author and proprietor of all things, it is properly a world of man's making and managing, and made up of an almoſt infinite variety of parts. For though all men are originally of the ſame make and conſtitution; yet as, among the whole multitude of them, there are hardly found two whoſe features, ſhape, and complexion, are exactly alike; ſo the difference of tempers, genius, way of living, ſtations, and worldly circumſtances, of affections, paſſions, powers of body or mind,

mind, manners, cuſtoms, and habits, &c. is yet more various. The ſeveral inventions of men, manual crafts, arts, ſciences, forming and managing ſocieties, great and ſmall, afford matter of endleſs ſpeculation; and the more neceſſary, that there is hardly any one thing, however enormous, or however trifling, which may not be improved to lead forward the mind to the higheſt and moſt valuable knowledge, and thereby to that perfection and happineſs which it is ſo much its intereſt to purſue.

Among all thoſe numerous particulars which compoſe theſe diſtinct worlds, there is not any one falls under man's obſervation, which does not at the ſame time put him upon a variety of inquiries about it: How far it reſembles, or differs from, ſuch other things as he is acquainted with; how it ſtands related to them in place, or with reſpect to proximity or diſtance; if it is dependent on any of them, or entirely detached from them; what properties or powers it is poſſeſſed of; whether peculiar to itſelf, or in common with others; ſuch as cannot be ſeparated without deſtroying its conſtitution, or ſo looſe and adventitious, that their abſence or preſence makes no alteration there; what

what effects are produced by its different applications to other things, and eſpecially to one's ſelf, whether for ſuſtenance, improvement, or actual pleaſure; and how it comes by ſuch properties and powers: in a word, whatever one can want information of, or about which a queſtion can be put, or any doubt moved, are all of them proper objects of knowledge. All theſe, and the particular inquiries that may be made concerning them, will be better underſtood by conſidering the ſeveral-ways and means by which they are brought under our obſervation and perception. Whatever lies beyond, goes for nothing, and can no more anſwer any purpoſe to us, than what has no being at all.

We may, I think, take it for granted, from what we had occaſion to obſerve on the human conſtitution, that the mind is ſo far from being originally provided with any fund of knowledge, either ideas, as they are called, or principles, that it cannot ſo much as be conſcious of its own being, until the impreſſions made on the appropriated parts of the animal ſyſtem excite the correſpondent perceptions: and

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there we muſt fix the riſe and foundation of all real knowledge, through all the ſteps and degrees of it, up to the higheſt and moſt ſublime that can be attained by man. And whatever cannot, by proper and immediate connections, be traced back to this ſource, and unleſs the impreſſion and perception can be produced on which it was founded, we may boldly pronounce that it is fantaſtic and deluſive: as, on the other hand, whoſoever will make a juſt eſtimate of human knowledge, muſt begin where nature does, and carefully mark out every ſtep that is taken in the progreſs, without ever loſing ſight of the very low beginnings whence the higheſt flights muſt be taken.

As this, then, muſt be allowed a fundamental poſition, That man can know nothing but what has ſome how or other been brought under his obſervation, nor any further, nor in any other manner, than it has been brought under it; ſo, on the other hand, by whatſoever means we can be enabled to perceive any kind of being, or any particulars about it, ſo far our knowledge may go. But as there are very different ways of doing this, according to the different nature and conſtitution of the objects we deal

deal with; and all the views and means muſt be ſuch as ſuit our conſtitution, and are within the reach of thoſe powers and organs the author of them has given us; the meaſures and degrees of our knowledge muſt be very different, and ſome things muſt lie quite beyond our reach.

The firſt objects that fall under obſervation are ſuch as are neceſſary for the ſupport of the animal ſyſtem; and it is ſome time before the child regards any thing elſe: ſuch as affect the eye with their glittering appearance are commonly the next; ſuch as give pleaſure, either by relieving ſome little felt uneaſineſs, or otherwiſe diverting, make great impreſſions; and ſuch likewiſe as give ſenſible pain. Theſe have quickly their native effect, make the correſpondent movements, and thereby engage the whole attention, and make the whole buſineſs of the little creature. As he comes to be acquainted with more objects, eſpecially the actions and ways of men, he more fully exerts his natural talent of imitation, and attempts to make out a ſort of images of every thing he ſees, until by degrees the mind and body ripen together into a capacity for the common and peculiar

liar buſineſs and enjoyments of the human life.—Theſe are children, one will ſay, and their whole conduct is engaged in childiſh things; what is that to philoſophers and wiſe men? It is true; but in them, and perhaps in them only, is human nature to be ſeen unſophiſticated and undiſguiſed; and the greateſt and wiſeſt man, however his acquaintance with things muſt be greater, and thereby the circle, both of his pleaſures and buſineſs, enlarged; yet if he acts naturally, he proceeds exactly on the ſame plan, the ſame natural principles, and the ſame method of procedure.

This uniformity of procedure is founded on ſomething in the human conſtitution, which deſerves to be carefully noted, and kept continually in view, viz. That all the natural functions of the united human ſyſtem are ſtrictly neceſſary, ſuch as the man has no more power, either to hinder or forward, than he has over his own conſtitution. He may contribute much either to cheriſh or to deſtroy it, and thereby may render the exerciſe of its ſeveral functions more vigorous or languiſhing; but ſo long as the conſtitution ſtands, it will affect and be affected, re-

ceive and make impreſſions and impulſes, in the ſame natural and neceſſary manner, that we ſee what we call the ſeveral inſtincts of birds and beaſts lead each kind into the ſame uniform invariable courſe; that is, according to their ſeveral conſtitutions, and the influence of the general mechaniſm of the heavens.

That all the animal functions in man are thus even and uniform, common experience, as well as the reaſon of the thing, makes altogether undeniable. The ſeveral external ſenſes receive each of them their appropriated impreſſions; the eye can no more be reſtrained from ſeeing, nor the ear from hearing, on the application of their proper objects, than the ſtomach, and appropriated parts, can be controlled in digeſting and diſtributing the proper aliment. It is the ſame in all the other impreſſions on the ſeveral parts of the body rightly diſpoſed; each of them will make its proper movement; and all of them will have their correſpondent feelings and perceptions, which the ſtrongeſt and moſt active mind cannot help being conſcious of, unleſs, perhaps, in ſome few caſes, where the organs and immediate inſtruments or means of perception are intenſely

tenſely engaged in other employments; and according to the meaſure and degree of the feeling and perception, the man muſt mind them; that is, judge of them, and remember them, whether he will or not. Not as if a man minded and regiſtered in his memory every perception alike; but according to the force of the impreſſion, and the meaſure of pleaſure or pain, they will every one of them command their proper room and regard there.

And hence, I imagine, we may be enabled to make ſome tolerably conſiſtent account of that common, yet very myſterious, thing, which goes under the name of *belief*, or *believing*; well known to every body, but which has been found, by the very different accounts of it, to be underſtood but by very few. All are agreed, and experience determines the agreement to be juſt, that it is no more in one's power to believe or not, in any queſtion before him, than it is to feel, or not to feel, the impulſes of external objects, and the impreſſions made by them on the animal ſyſtem: and ſo it muſt be, for this good reaſon, that belief is nothing elſe but that ſtate of mind, or more properly of the

whole united ſyſtem, which is the natural reſult of all the impreſſions, perceptions, and conſequential movements, internal and external, laid together. As the original impreſſions are not only different, but often contrary to one another, where matters are regularly and orderly carried, theſe muſt all be compared and adjuſted by the ruling mind, and a new impreſſion made on the inward ſenſe, bringing the whole ſyſtem to agree in one, even, uniform movement; which is the true occaſion of that inward pleaſure and ſatisfaction which men feel on the clear diſcovery of truth, on being ſettled in a firm belief of it; eſpecially after having been confuſed and diſtracted by contrary impreſſions and feelings.

I ſaid, belief was more properly expreſſed by the ſtate of the whole united ſyſtem, than by that of the mind, to obviate what, I apprehend, is a miſtake, which has brought along with it ſome very bad conſequences, viz. that believing is an act of the pure intellect; which ſeems naturally to infer, that the animal ſyſtem has no ſhare in it. This is ſo far from being true, that, whatever may be the ſtate of the human ſoul when ſeparated from the body,

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ſo long as the union continues, there neither is, nor can be, any ſingle action of any kind, exerted by the moſt abſtracted and ſpeculative mind, without either the influence or concurrence of all the eſſential parts of the ſyſtem. It is true, a man may opine, and in his calm moments, that is, when he is free from paſſionate feelings, may perſuade himſelf there is reaſon on one ſide, and perhaps that he really believes the thing; but until the impreſſions are ſtrong enough to engage the heart, and to raiſe and maintain ſuch movements in the animal ſyſtem, as overpower all contrary ones, and reconcile the whole man to all the known conſequences of it, he never will believe.

And hence one may adjuſt the meaning of theſe common expreſſions of *rational* and *unreaſonable faith* or *belief;* and when it can be ſaid to be either the one or the other; which are not ſo to be underſtood as if reaſon, or, if one pleaſes, the mind, on the appearance of good reaſon, could at all times command belief at pleaſure, or yet that a man could ever believe any thing while reaſon appears againſt it; but it very frequently happens that man acts without

but any regard to belief at all; very frequently with a ſort of half belief, and often in a direct oppoſition to belief. In all theſe caſes, and, perhaps, theſe will take in the whole of moſt mens actions, the mind is in a manner wholly paſſive, and forced to give way to the tumultuous or irregular movements of the animal ſyſtem. But there are a number of caſes, wherein the mind, not being thoroughly informed, is either ſeduced by appearances, or bribed into the party by preſent pleaſure; in which caſe commonly what is wanting in juſt reaſon to found a firm belief, is abundantly ſupplied by ſtiffneſs and obſtinacy; and as the paſſions are there thoroughly engaged, and have got the command of the whole ſyſtem, reaſon is entirely loſt on them, and can make no impreſſion, until the violent paſſionate movements are ſome how abated, or turned into another channel. Nor can belief ever be called rational, until the whole man, and every movement of the ſyſtem, is formed on the truth of things, and every power regulated by the juſt deciſions and conſequential impreſſions of the well-informed mind. But until the mind is thoroughly informed,

informed, or, which is the ſame thing, has perceived and balanced every impreſſion from objects without, in which the man, or the queſtion in view, has any concern, and has ſtrength enough to make a new impreſſion and ſuitable movements and feelings in the general ſyſtem, he will either float in a wavering uncertainty, or the ruling paſſion or movements which have the aſcendant, will create belief ſuch as it is; and yet ſo ſtubborn, as hardly to leave room for the leaſt feelings of remorſe, or any contrary movement.

From all this it will appear, that what we call *belief*, and, in one view of it, *faith*, ſtands much on the ſame bottom with other habits or cuſtoms commonly acknowledged to be ſuch. But then there will likewiſe be found a very great odds. Both are founded in certain conſtant and continued movements in the ſyſtem; but belief conſiſts in ſuch as are purely and properly natural, and ariſing ſo directly from the conſtitution, that the nearer that approaches its true and regular pitch, ſo much ſtronger and ireſiſtible theſe impreſſions and movements are, which create that kind at leaſt of it which is regular and genuine, and

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which only deſerves the name; whereas all other habits are acquired by repeated acts; and ſo far as they are inconſiſtent with thoſe movements and feelings which conſtitute right belief, will be deſtroyed and rooted out by the perfection of the conſtitution, and cannot ſubſiſt any longer than they are ſupported by ignorance, error, and folly. Cuſtom is, indeed, with great juſtice, called a *ſecond* nature; but ſtill it is no more; and to confound it with what is the direct and immediate reſult of the conſtitution, is ſo to confound all things, that one ſhall not be able to ſay one thing is more natural or unnatural, truer or falſer, than another.

By this likewiſe we may be able to judge what that evidence is which is the ground of all right belief, and whence it is that it ſhould appear ſo differently to different perſons. As the impreſſions made by the ſame objects are more ſtrong or faint, the perception of them muſt be ſo likewiſe; and therefore juſt ſo far as any thing can be brought under one's obſervation, no matter by what means, ſo much evidence there will be. And as the means of perception, or by which any thing is brought under

under obſervation, are various and diverſe, and all do not affect the conſtitution with the ſame ſtrength and vigour, thence ariſe different kinds and degrees of evidence; and conſequently of belief, perſuaſion, or aſſurance, in the ſame proportion.

Man is ſo made, that no material thing can be brought under his obſervation, nor can he have any perception of matter, but by the mediation of his bodily organs, which go under the name of *ſenſes*; and juſt as many ways as matter, or any part or parcels of it, can be applied to theſe, ſo many different means or mediums of perception will he have. They are commonly reduced to five, or rather four of them only have particular names, while all the reſt, which are vaſtly numerous, and many of them as different from one another as theſe, are left under the general name of *feelings* or *ſenſations*, diſtinguiſhed only by their effects on the body, as pleaſurable or painful, and as they affect the ſeveral parts of it external or internal; whence they take their particular denominations. Hence, even on this curſory view, it will appear, that it is not the objects themſelves, much leſs the ſubſtance

or inward eſſence of them, that we perceive, at leaſt in the firſt inſtance; but the impreſſions they make, or rather the feelings occaſioned by the ſeveral motions of the animal ſyſtem; by which the mind is at once excited, and furniſhed with the means of making and obtaining further knowledge of them, and thereby making further advances in all neceſſary and uſeful knowledge.

It requires ſcarce any attention at all to ſatisfy one, that all the ſeelings which go under that general name in the ſeveral parts of the body, are no more than the natural and neceſſary conſequences and effects of the different applications that are made to them of the different parts of matter about us; and all the knowledge we can thereby have of them is no more than this, How they affect ſuch a conſtitution as ours? It is true, we take occaſion from theſe feelings to mark the ſeveral parcels or ſyſtems of matter which occaſion them; and to diſtinguiſh them one from another, by what we call their *qualities*, hot or cold, hard or ſoft, &c. and ſuch and ſuch taſtes or ſmells; while it is abundantly evident, we can mean no more than that they appear

pear ſo to us, and make ſuch impreſſions on the animal ſyſtem; while at the ſame time they would appear quite otherwiſe to beings of a different conſtitution, as of neceſſity they muſt affect them in quite another manner.

The perceptions we have of objects by hearing or ſeeing, are yet more remote, as the impreſſions are not made directly and immediately on the appropriate organs, but by the intervention of other parts of matter, air and light; without which, all the informations we receive by theſe ſenſes, and by which the greateſt part of our knowledge is conveyed, would be entirely loſt; and, along with it, all the pleaſure ariſing from the beautiful colours, figures, or arrangement and poſition of material objects, and the wonderful variety of ſounds; by which, not only objects are diſtinguiſhed, and notice given of their nearneſs or diſtance, but the greateſt pleaſures and moſt valuable intereſts of life are carried on.

By this natural view of the origin of human knowledge, it will appear likewiſe, that no object can be apprehended by one ſimple perception; but the ſeveral proper-

ties, or what we call *powers* and *qualities*, perceived as they are by different means and organs, muſt be firſt apprehended ſeparately; and it requires judgement, as well as obſervation and experience, to lay them together with any exactneſs: and as it frequently happens, that ſome one or other of them may be neglected or overlooked, thence ariſes at beſt, imperfection, and frequently confuſion, in our knowledge, even of ſuch things as lie neareſt our hands; nor is there any thing in the nature of thoſe qualities we have perceived to lead us into the knowledge of any other qualities, until an opportunity offers of their making ſuch impreſſions on us, or on ſomething which we have under our eye, as obliges us to obſerve them.

It is from this ſuperficial way of judging by appearances, that a great number of things, which might be of great uſe to us, lie by neglected, and in a manner entirely overlooked, ſo ſoon as the ſhort-lived admiration raiſed by the firſt impreſſions, is over. The colours, ſhape, bulk, of almoſt any thing, will touch, perhaps very ſenſibly, while the object is new; but will quickly be juſtled out by impreſſions which

which more vigorouſly affect us, and which thereby appear to be of greater importance to us; and according to the ſtrength and continuance of them, put the man on further inquiries; how they appear in all the different views he is capable of taking them in; how they feel to all the ſeveral ſenſes, or parts of the body, where the experiment can be made; how they affect us in the ſeveral points of nearneſs or diſtance; and what are the conſequences of the different ways of applying them to other objects, either as they ſtand in nature, or may be applied by human ſkill; their continuance and duration; and how they may be preſerved and deſtroyed; their powers increaſed or abated; and thus, upon the whole, improved to the beſt advantage. On theſe, and ſuch inquiries, is founded, not only the whole practice of agriculture, and the manual crafts, but all that is valuable in any branch of knowledge whatſoever, the profoundeſt ſcience, and deepeſt myſteries of philoſophy not excepted.

It is in theſe ſorts of reviews, and ordering and ſorting the ſeveral impreſſions and perceptions, that man remembers, that the natural

natural power of imaging is exerted, which is at once the great mean of promoting and carrying on human knowledge, and gives the true diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of it; that is, the knowledge of *ſuch beings* as have not, cannot have, any acceſs to direct immediate perceptions of the internal eſſence, ſubſtance, or conſtitution of any one thing in nature, even of ſuch as are neareſt at hand, and they are the moſt intimately acquainted with, their own minds and ſpirits, and the matter about them.

There needs no laborious reaſoning to inſtruct the truth and certainty of this aſſertion; there is a much nearer way, and the only one which can carry conviction in it, viz. that every one make the trial for himſelf, in that which he fancies himſelf beſt acquainted with. He will readily find ſeveral diſtinct and ſenſibly different perceptions of the different ways he is affected by it, either ſeparately, or as it is conjoined and united with ſomething elſe; and by carefully comparing, and laying theſe together, he forms an image of, he knows not what, inveſted with properties and powers, ſuch as he has from time to time perceived; and perhaps may be led on

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to image to himſelf the manner how theſe effects may be produced. But ſtill it is but an image, unleſs the thing itſelf can be brought directly under his obſervation; which, at leaſt in our preſent ſtate, we are ſure can never be done.

I ſaid, the man forms for himſelf an image or repreſentation of he knows not what; not as if he was in any uncertainty, whether the thing he means to image or repreſent to himſelf, has any real exiſtence; the certain and infallible perception he has of its appearances and impreſſions, and what he feels with the moſt intimate conſciouſneſs following upon them, leave him no manner of room to entertain any doubt about that: but what the thing is in itſelf abſolutely conſidered, and how it would appear to a being who could by one intuitive view ſee into its inward conſtitution, the man cannot ſay. He knows, or may know, how it affects himſelf in every circumſtance; and further he has no manner of concern with it.

This is evidently the caſe in all our ideas, as they are called, of ſubſtances, or particular beings, and of the ſeveral collections and combinations of them, as they

are

are connected in their natural ſtate, or are ſo by human art and ſkill. They are all of them no other than the images of things we thus frame every man for himſelf; and are as different as the ſeveral perceptions of them, and the different ways of laying them together, are in different perſons. But this power of imaging ſtops not here; but by comparing, compounding, dividing, increaſing, diminiſhing, and thus endleſsly varying the original images, new ones are framed, which never had, or perhaps never will have, any exiſtence; and by the aſſiſtance of theſe, a ſort of images are formed, of ſuch things, as either by their ſubtilty, or remoteneſs, lie entirely out of the reach of human obſervation. Of this ſort are all the inviſible cauſes of the ſeveral alterations we obſerve on the face of the earth, throughout the different ſeaſons of the year; the whole buſineſs of vegetation, production of animals great and ſmall, metals, minerals, &c. Nay this power of imaging has been often, and perhaps yet is, very unduly extended to the cauſes and principles of thought and motion, ſuch beings as are truly and properly ſpiritual, yea even to the Father of ſpirits, the original being himſelf;

himſelf; and is the true ſpring of all the idolatry and image-worſhip that ever has appeared in the world.

On the right management of this faculty of imaging, the whole buſineſs of what we call *deſign* and *contrivance* in the management and conduct of life has its entire dependence; and by the neglect of it are occaſioned, not only the reveries of madmen, and the many fooliſh and impracticable projects by which multitudes have been ruined, but likewiſe all the miſcarriages of common life, while the creatures of fancy appear ſo like realities, that they impoſe upon the unexperienced and unwary with ſuch powerful and pleaſing deluſions, that it is the hardeſt thing in the world to undeceive them, until it be too late; that is, until dear-bought experience convince them they are impoſed upon by the creatures of their own fancy, and images which had no being but what themſelves had given them through miſtake and deluſion.

And yet it is to this ſame power of making images of things we never ſaw, that the far greateſt part, even of our real and moſt uſeful knowledge, owes its birth.

Confined as every man is to this earth, and moſt men to a very narrow corner of it, there are but very few things that can fall under any one's direct and immediate obſervation, and this defect can only be ſupplied by information and inſtruction, whereby all the obſervations that have been made through the ſeveral ages of the world may be communicated, ſo as any one may make his advantage of them; one of the peculiar excellencies of mankind, and perhaps the higheſt he has above other animals; the higheſt, we may well ſay, that any creature of his make and conſtitution can boaſt of.

ESSAYS

On ſeveral of the DOCTRINES of REVELATION.

I. *Propriety.*

PROpriety of ſentiment, and propriety of action, are ſo nearly related, that the one cannot be underſtood without the other.

What action is, needs no defining. The ſame cannot be ſaid of ſentiment. The word is common, but not ſo commonly underſtood; neither can it be, without juſt views of the human frame and conſtitution.

To attain this, it will not be enough to *ſay*, that this or the other affection, paſſion, or inſtinct, are found in all mankind, unleſs it can be inſtructed that they really are ſo; nor even then, unleſs it can be ſhown, how they naturally and neceſſarily ariſe out of the whole human conſtitution taken together.

This is evident from a very obvious truth, That man is a compounded being, and compounded of very different parts; each of them deſigned to anſwer particular purpoſes. In their union, and ſubordination one to another, the human conſtitution conſiſts. And when the ſentiments and actions are exactly conformed to this eſtabliſhed order, then, and then only, can they be ſaid to be either natural or proper; and when any part or particular ſyſtem breaks out of this order, and attempts to act ſingly, or beyond its proper ſphere, the ſentiment formed upon it, and the action produced by it, muſt be improper and unnatural.

There are two very different ſenſes in which any ſentiment, or courſe of action, may, with propriety, be ſaid to be natural; either when it reſults ſo directly from the human conſtitution, or is ſo every way agreeable to the order eſtabliſhed there, that it can by no means be eradicated, but is always found equally ſtrong in every man, whatever alteration may be made in his circumſtances or ſituation. And ſuch is the deſire of happineſs.

When the nature of happineſs comes to be diſtinctly underſtood, it will be found

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to be, I do not ſay pleaſure, but being perfectly pleaſed. And as mens taſtes and ſentiments vary, ſo do their pleaſures. And hence ariſe their different purſuits, while their ultimate intentions are the ſame.

Theſe ſort of cravings and deſires are what they call *inſtincts*; like thoſe of mere animals, all invariable.

It is not barely our life, nor even, ſtrictly ſpeaking, ourſelves, that by this inſtinct we are influenced to love; but the comforts and enjoyments of life: and this may be ſo ſtrong, that we may properly enough be ſaid to love them better than ourſelves.

There is another courſe which may be called natural, and which takes in every thing, good or bad, which can by any means get ſtrength enough to form the heart upon them; and ſome of theſe may ariſe ſo naturally, and without any pains or labour of ours, that it may be doubted whether they do not belong to the firſt.

That which bids faireſt, after the animal ſenſations and appetites, is *ſympathy*; which, like all other paſſions and affections, depends not on our will or pleaſure. But as that, as well as all the reſt, depends entirely on the ſentiments or inward

ward feelings of the heart; and as theſe are very different in different men, and formed upon the more or leſs perfect diſpoſitions of the human ſyſtem, they can never be reckoned among invariable inſtincts.

Where the ſentiment is formed upon the right diſpoſition of the complex human ſyſtem, it produces that agreeable temper which is called *humanity;* and where it is perfect, produces perfect ſympathy. But this is ſeldom or never found in the preſent ſtate of mankind. We enter warmly into the joys and ſorrows of thoſe we love; to ſtrangers our ſympathy is more cool; and ſuperſtitious zeal entirely deſtroys it: and there are numberleſs well-known caſes, where the ſentiments may be wrought up to ſuch a pitch of brutal inſenſibility and ſavageneſs, as that the moſt excruciating tortures of our fellow-creatures give the moſt exquiſite pleaſure. Upon the whole, ſympathy in all its forms will be found to keep pace with our love to our neighbour; and is either a certain modification of it, or a neceſſary effect produced by it.

No man can love or hate what or when he will, or ſo much as regulate the degree of

of either. He muſt love what pleaſes him, and hate the contrary. And according to the degrees of pleaſure or pain, ſuch muſt his love or averſion be; and the degrees are innumerable, but the ſame neceſſary paſſions in every degree.

But men as well as children may be pleaſed with trifles. With theſe life begins: and however one object may drive out another, it is but an exchange of trifles, unleſs one could fix upon what is perfectly good; i. e. ſuch as is fitted to give perfect pleaſure: and thence it has been the buſineſs of the wiſeſt men to find out what they called *the chief good*, ſuch as could make one happy in the want, and even in the loſs, of every thing elſe; i. e. ſuch as perfectly ſuits the human conſtitution, ſo as to raiſe and maintain perfect pleaſure.

Of the two grand ſects of ancient philoſophers, the Stoics took it too high, and the Epicureans as much too low. The defect of the firſt lay in not diſtinguiſhing between abſolute and limited perfection and happineſs; that is, ſuch as the conſtitution and circumſtances of the being who wanted to be happy will admit of.

Being

Being, or life, is but the ſubſtratum, the ſubject on which pleaſure or enjoyment is grafted; and is not ſimply good or deſirable for itſelf, but for the pleaſure or enjoyment which may attend it. But on the perfection of life the capacity of enjoyment depends; and hence, ſo long as there is life there is hope.

2. *The Knowledge of God.*

IT is a true obſervation, that all that we can be taught of God, ſo long as the evidence ſtands only on metaphyſical reaſoning, makes but a faint impreſſion; and that to fix and continue it, there is a neceſſity for ſuch an hiſtorical account of his works and ways, as may exemplify to us the powers and perfections which we are taught to attribute to him. It is thus we form the characters of men whom we have never ſeen; and thus God himſelf hath taught us to form our conceptions of him.

But when we form our characters of men, we have an idea of a being well known to us, and diſtinguiſhed from others by a particular name. There are men

men who profeſs to have as clear and diſtinct an idea of a ſpirit as of any part of matter. If any have ſuch a talent, ſure every one has not. All that we know of that ſort of beings, muſt take its riſe from what we feel in ourſelves, and the perfections and powers we are conſcious of. We feel that we think, in all the different forms of it; and, to a certain degree, we can do what we will. But what this ſame ſpirit or mind is which perceives, judges, wills, and exerts theſe degrees of power, we can conceive no farther, than that it is not ſuch a being as groſs ſenſible matter; and all our accounts of its eſſence, or of the being which acts and poſſeſſes theſe known properties, conſiſt in negatives, immaterial, inviſible, &c.

Did we know what being and life are, we might poſſibly form ſome ſatisfying conception, though nothing that could deſerve the name of an idea; and here we are taught to fix our laſt reſource, by the *name* that God hath choſen for himſelf, and which diſtinguiſhes him from every other being, JEHOVAH, which is beſt rendered by, *He that is*,—the poſſeſſor and proprietor of *being*; and, conſequently,

of all meaſures and degrees of perfection. The nearer we can raiſe our conceptions to this, which always implies life, and all its powers, the nearer will we approach to right conceptions of that incomprehenſible being, who hath condeſcended to give an authentic hiſtory of his works and ways, by which he hath diſcovered himſelf to us in his true character, and the perfections which belong to him.

However we may be forced to apprehend the divine perfections ſeparately, or in different views, they are all one in the divine eſſence. Perfect *being* is perfect *power*; and perfect power cannot be conceived without abſolute perfection ſubſiſting in the moſt perfect manner.

3. *Faith.*

FAith, as it ſtands deſcribed and recommended in the Bible, is a firm and aſſured confidence in God, founded in the belief of the teſtimony he has given us in the hiſtory of the Bible; where we have his true character, inſtructed by ſenſible documents, his works and ways with men;

men; particularly in the proviſion he has made, and the comprehenſive promiſe and grant he hath given, of eternal life.

This is rendered credible by the perfection, the faithfulneſs, and power, of the promiſer; but eſpecially by the pledge he has given of his wonderful grace and love to man in Jeſus Chriſt, who is the foundation and ſurety of the promiſe.

This ſecurity is recommended, as a good ground of confidence, by the Spirit and power of God, and all the fullneſs of life being lodged in his hand; and as they appear to have been lodged there for this very purpoſe, that he might convey the promiſed bleſſing, ſpirit and life to us, this finiſhes the aſſurance.

Hence it is obvious, that faith, or truſt and confidence in God, muſt begin at Jeſus Chriſt, the ſure, and the only ſure, foundation on which it can ſtand. And where faith in Chriſt is, there naturally and neceſſarily our faith and hope in God follow upon it.

4. *Views of God.*

AMong all the difficulties we meet with in the matters of religion, the great one, and which lays a foundation for all the reſt, is forming proper apprehenſions of the inviſible being. The character of God we may, with ſome ſatisfaction, form, in the ſame manner in which we form the characters of men, viz. by the reports we hear of them; but theſe have little effect, unleſs verified to our obſervation by facts, that is, by ſuch works and ways as uniformly inſtruct the character. Thus we may form proper conceptions of what are called *divine attributes*, wiſdom, power, goodneſs, &c.; and even ſomething of the immenſity of his being and omnipreſence: but after all, theſe are but modes of being; and though they make a general character, unleſs we have a determinate ſubſtance or perſon to connect them with, we are at a loſs where to apply it. This has been the foundation of all the miſapprehenſions of the Deity; while men were driven either to fancy him like themſelves, or to run into confuſion

confuſion inextricable, not knowing where to find him, and worſhipping an unknown God. This was in ſome meaſure remedied to the ancient patriarchs by perſonal appearances; but with this diſadvantage, that theſe appearances gave a handle, either to conceive of him as a man, however diſtinguiſhed by extraordinary powers, or made it hard to diſtinguiſh him from an ordinary angel; the creator from the creature.

This was in great meaſure remedied to the old Iſraelites by the tabernacle and temple, and the glory which appeared there: by which he was effectually diſtinguiſhed from every creature; and they knew certainly where to find and apply to him on every occaſion.

But theſe were only ſhadows of heavenly things: and all difficulties are removed in Jeſus Chriſt alone. Though we can form no proper conceptions of that God whom no man hath ſeen, nor can ſee; yet we can eaſily conceive of his uniting himſelf to man, as he has done in him: ſo that where-ever Jeſus is, there we may be ſure to find God. And thus Chriſt is at once the temple, and the prieſt interceſſor, by whom, and by whoſe miniſtry, we may at all times approach

approach God in as diſtinct a manner, as if we ſaw him with our eyes, or he were ſenſibly preſent. For he that hath ſeen the Son, hath ſeen the Father; and no man can come unto God, or ſo much as know him to any purpoſe, but by him.

5. *The Original and Progreſs of Knowledge.*

I Know not how it has been taken for granted, that in the firſt ages of the world men were no better than modern ſavages; and indeed great pains have been taken to ſhow how they were gradually civilized and poliſhed into the excellent beings they are now found. That ſavages have been, and ſtill are, will admit of no diſpute. But from the beginning, we have good reaſon to believe, that men were not ſo. The poets took the matter right; and they were the greateſt and moſt learned men. All agree, that in the beginning there was what is called *the Golden age:* and there they image ſuch a ſtate of mankind as could never have entered into a reaſonable man's head, if a foundation had not been given by ſome old tradition handed down to them;

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as the ſtate they deſcribe is almoſt as unnatural as the ſuppoſition of men and other animals riſing out of the mud of the Nile.

Moſes has given us the riſe of this tradition, and his account of the true origin and original ſtate of mankind is ſo natural, that many, nay moſt learned men, have taken it for granted, that natural reaſon could have diſcovered it; but contrary to all the reaſon and experience in the world. An experiment indeed could never be made, becauſe the knowledge, or the tradition of the creation, and of God, who made all, has been in the world ſince ever there were men in it, and ſubſiſted long by tradition before there was any philoſopher to reaſon upon it.

It hath never been queſtioned, that all the wiſdom of the firſt ages conſiſted in certain facts, handed down in the natural channel of tradition, from one age to another, which the conceited Greeks called the *barbaric philoſophy*; and which their ſucceſſors, the moderns, have rejected as no philoſophy at all, becauſe it ſtands not on rational arguments and demonſtrations, but only upon the authority of thoſe who maintained the tradition, which

which is rejected with diſdain, as unworthy of a philoſopher.

It is a problem worth diſcuſſing, What ſtate the world would be in if there were no knowledge left in it but what ſtands on reaſon and demonſtration? As the knowledge of every fact which does not fall under our own obſervation muſt be rejected, and reaſon can diſcover none, there would be very little left for the wiſeſt of men to found their reaſoning and demonſtration upon, and the world would ſoon be ſunk into the abyſs of ignorance and barbarity.

How ſuch a fooliſh poſition ever came to get footing among men pretending to reaſon, can be no way accounted for, but by the enormous pride of thoſe who called themſelves *philoſophers*, and who, as they pretended to diſcover the cauſes of every event, deſpiſed the way of information and tradition, to which the meaneſt of the vulgar had as eaſy acceſs as the moſt learned; which yet every one muſt ſee is as natural, and greatly more ſo, than what they pretend to. And what makes this yet more ſtrange is, that the far greateſt part even of their knowledge ſtood on facts, which they

they neither did, nor could know any thing of, but by tradition and information.

The Greeks originally had no knowledge among them but what they received from the traditions they gathered up among other nations. It was many ages downward ere they attempted to reaſon on theſe points. Travelling was their courſe of education; and they who picked up the beſt or moſt authentic traditional facts were called *wiſe men*. And by the obſcure accounts we have of theſe traditions, it appears, that there was more religion in them, and of courſe more perfect morality, than ever the philoſophers could make out. But diſdaining to receive facts which they could not account for, they tried to reaſon upon them, and reaſoned themſelves and their followers into the profoundeſt ignorance of God, and of what they had either to hope or fear from him. And one who is reckoned the wiſeſt among them, is extolled to this day among philoſophers, for bringing down philoſophy from heaven to earth; that is, for rejecting religion, and the worſhip of God, and ſetting up what is called *morality* in its room.

Thus the primitive facts, and in them

all that was worth knowing, was loſt; and ſo entirely, that the utmoſt efforts the greateſt geniuſes could make, inſtead of enlightening, contributed only more to confound and perplex the world, until the original facts were again revived by the propagation of the goſpel.

In the beginning of Chriſtianity, this was done in the plaineſt and ſimpleſt manner, the goſpel conſiſting only in a few plain facts, and their native conſequences, which needed neither learning nor genius, until they fell into the hands of philoſophers. Then indeed, by their refining upon them, they were ſerved in the ſame manner as the original ones were by their predeceſſors; and every fact, and every conſequence, muſt now be tried at the bar of what philoſophers call *reaſon*.

6. *Noſce teipſum.*

THE knowledge of one's ſelf has been in all ages the moſt neceſſary, as being of all others the moſt uſeful; in ſo much that it may be ſaid with a good degree of aſſurance, that all the folly, miſcarriages, and diſaſters of every kind, ha

bee

been owing, either to the want or imperfection of it.

Many attempts have been made, ſome on one part, ſome on another, of what is called *human nature*, or *the frame and conſtitution of mankind*: and in the iſſue, ſome have exalted it to ſuch a meaſure of innate dignity and worth, as ſhould ſeem to come little ſhort of perfection, excepting only the limitation they are forced to find in point of power; while others, on this neceſſary limitation, and the narrowneſs of human powers in every view, have ſunk man into a very abject and pitiable condition. Inſtances enough are to be found on both ſides, and conſequences charged and retorted of a very intereſting nature: And it will be hard to ſay, though both are dangerous, which of the two are moſt ſo.

That enormous meaſure of ſelf-eſteem naturally ariſing from the flattering ſcheme, is apt to betray the mind into a contempt, and conſequently an utter neglect, of the abſolutely neceſſary means of attaining juſt notions of ſuch things as men are moſt concerned to know. By this means, they are betrayed into the moſt dangerous

miſtakes, and a moſt ruinous courſe of folly. On the other hand, the moſt dangerous conſequence of taking our meaſures too low, will be, the weakening that laudable ambition of excelling in every perfection; while, in the mean time, it leaves the mind open to entertain all the inſtruction and aſſiſtance that may offer themſelves. So that one would think this laſt the much ſafer, though the leaſt ſhowy and agreeable view.

It might be expected, that a ſubject, which every one carries the original of in himſelf, ſhould neither be a very intricate, nor difficult ſtudy; that there ſhould be no more neceſſary than to look into one's ſelf, to ſee how things ſtand at home, and compare them with what is to be obſerved in others. But neither the one nor the other caſt up ſo readily as one might reaſonably imagine. We are generally ſo much intereſted in what lies without us, that we have neither leiſure nor inclination to look within: and the ways of men, though all acting from the ſame original principle, are ſo various, that all the obſervation we can make of them, and the experience we can acquire, are found to go but a very ſhort way.

We enter into this world we know not how,

how, in ſuch a low, indigent, and abſolutely dependent ſtate, as is enough to hide pride for ever from our eyes. All our attainments and improvements come from without, and are one way or other acquired; ſo that all we can call our own is a capacity of improvement, and of growing up toward the higheſt meaſure of perfection our frame will admit of. And when we have acquired all that can be attained in a natural way, little more can be ſaid, than that we are made wiſer than the beaſts of the field.

Our animal powers are plainly ſhort of many of theirs: and though we find ſomething in ourſelves by which we can perceive, think, and reaſon, with a conſciouſneſs of what we are about, which can only be the work of what we have learned to call a *ſpirit*; yet we can hardly ſtir a ſtep without feeling the narrow extent of theſe intellectual powers. Though we feel ourſelves compounded of what we call *matter* and *ſpirit*, we know not, we cannot know, what either of them is, how they are united, and how they act upon one another in ſuch a perfect concert as we find they do. This is another very humbling conſideration;

tion; and which, one would think, ſhould effectually mortify the pride of human underſtanding; eſpecially when we look about us, and find ourſelves incapable of arriving at the thorough knowledge of any one thing, but only that ſuch things there are, and that ſome of their moſt obvious properties or powers are perceived by us.

When we come to what is the proper uſe of reaſon and underſtanding, which is, to conſider what is our proper buſineſs in this world,—what man can carry it any farther, (until he learns it from thoſe who were in the world before him), than the ſatisfying his conſtitutional cravings and appetites; or acquiring what may be called an artificial way of living, by imitating his elders; or being inſtructed by them in what they call *the miſtreſs-ſcience*, the doctrine of morals; which indeed is, or may be, very well calculated for a preſent world, if they have only as much diſcerning as to know what is good and profitable for men?

But there is a very different kind of beings, which ſome how or other have been obtruded upon all the world, to account for the riſe and original of which, when ſeriouſly

ſeriouſly ſet about, will be found a very difficult taſk.

That there are certain inviſible powers, immenſely above the human, will readily occur to any who has but an ordinary degree of reflection. A reflection too will as naturally occur, that we are at their mercy; which cannot but produce a ſort of ſuperſtitious fear of we know not what, and which we are very naturally led to lodge in thoſe things which we obſerve to have the greateſt influence, the ſun, moon, and ſtars, clouds, wind, &c. And if ever there was a time when the powers of the material heavens were underſtood, and proper obſervations made on their natural effects, mens worſhip and adoration was like enough to reſt there; and there it appears to have reſted, until that valuable piece of knowledge was loſt, and men came to worſhip, as a great part of the world do even to this day, they know not what.

And hence very naturally ariſes the faireſt diſcovery that can be made of the weakneſs of the human intellectual powers. There are but two ways of bringing it to the trial; either by what they have done, or by what they can, or may be rendered capable

capable of doing. The laſt has been repreſented as impoſſible to bring to any abſolute certainty; nor indeed is it needful, ſince the other, as we find it, gives, if not demonſtration, yet very ſatisfactory evidence. It will readily be acknowledged by impartial judges a very wrong way, to take our meaſures from thoſe people who have the Bible in their hands. It is only in infants or untaught men that we are to look for pure nature. All tradition muſt be excluded. But we need not inſiſt on this precaution. If we take the world as we find it, how many nations are there of perfect ſavages, who yet have lived in ſociety many thouſands of years? Sure their natural powers muſt be very low, when in all that time they could not find out how to make their beſt of what they had among their hands.

But if we ſhould allow that theſe are hardly men; which yet is by no means the caſe; for it is found that their capacities, when properly applied, are nothing ſhort of our own: but ſuppoſing it to be ſo, how many nations have been, and how many are there at this day, nothing inferior to the moſt knowing and civilized,

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ſo far as relates to a preſent life, and this ſenſible world, who yet, in all ſpiritual and religious reſpects, are as ignorant and brutiſh as the verieſt ſavages? What concluſion can carry more evidence than this, that had mankind been left to themſelves, they had never entertained a thought beyond the preſent ſtate of things as they appear to our ſenſes? All beſides muſt have been involved in impenetrable darkneſs.

But it will be objected, That all, even the moſt barbarous and ſavage nations, have ſome notion of ſuch a being as we call *God*, and of ſome ſtate of exiſtence beyond the grave; that there is a ſubſtantial difference between good and evil, right and wrong, which we call *virtue* and *vice*; and have accordingly a conſcience accuſing or excuſing. As to the laſt, it may very well be; nor can it be otherwiſe when they are capable of obſerving what is good and profitable to men. But as their notions of this laſt have been, and muſt be, very different, according to the difference of their ſituations, the ſtandard of virtue and vice muſt be very different; and patriotiſm, or national intereſt,

generally has ſwallowed up all other virtues.

As to their notions of the exiſtence of a God, and of the worſhip and regard due to the being they called ſo, and their notions of a future ſtate, it cannot be doubted that they have always been in the world; and ſo ſtrongly rooted there, that the utmoſt pitch of ignorance and barbarity have never been able quite to eradicate them. But then the queſtion will be, How they came there? That human reaſon and underſtanding never produced them, there is this ſtrong preſumption; that the worſhip, or more properly the means of placating, or preſerving the favour of their deities, viz. ſacrifices, is the greateſt abſurdity in the eye of reaſon that can well be imagined, and was exploded as ſuch by the wiſeſt philoſophers. And thence it will be obvious to conclude, that the principle on which they depended, viz. the knowledge of a ſupreme governor of the world, came likewiſe from ſome other quarter.

It is true indeed, beyond contradiction, that man, with reſpect to the whole both of his principles and practice, is entirely formed upon imitation and example, and really is what

what cuſtom and uſe have made him. And this accounts well enough for that obſtinate tenaciouſneſs which is ſo generally found among men, of even the moſt abſurd and glaringly unreaſonable opinions and practices ſo common among mankind; and would account likewiſe for theſe rites, ſuppoſing them once to have got general footing. But then the queſtion will recur, How they came there, and by what means they obtained ſuch a general concurrence, and ſuch authority as all the reaſon and philoſophy in the world could not counterbalance?

The only ſolution that can be given, is, That they were believed to have been appointed by the deity whom they were to worſhip. In fact, this was the caſe: But how that perſuaſion came to be ſo general? is another queſtion. Of whatever uſe the belief of a ſuperintending deity might be to politicians and legiſlators, this way of worſhip could anſwer none. It ſuppoſes the belief of ſuch powers, and could never take place without ſome foundation in truth.

This puts us again upon a further inquiry, How this belief came? I ſaid ſome-

thing of a very natural riſe of ſome blind belief of ſupernatural or inviſible powers. But that could go no farther than it was diſcovered and enforced by ſenſible effects. What lies beyond the reach of human perception, can never fall under human obſervation; and men muſt have been well advanced in the art of reaſoning, before they could gather, from the eſtabliſhed order of the univerſe, that it had an intelligent cauſe. But even when this point was gained, the difficulty remained, Where to lodge this cauſe? whether in the frame of nature, or in ſome ſuperior being, who had the property and diſpoſal of all? The laſt lies ſo very remote from human obſervation, that we find in fact the wiſeſt and moſt rational reſted in the notion of ſomething they called a *ſpirit* pervading and influencing the whole world, as our ſouls do our whole frame.

But, then, whether this world, thus furniſhed, ever had a beginning, i. e. was made, or, as we call it, *created;* or ſubſiſted as it is from eternity, remains to be determined. Men muſt have been greatly enlightened before ſuch an inquiry entered into their heads: and when it did, the fartheſt they could go was, to ſuppoſe that the materials

materials were lying in what they called *a chaos*, and that God and nature brought them into this order. But that all was once nothing, could never be imagined; becauſe they knew no power adequate to ſuch an effect as that of making any thing, much leſs ſuch an immenſe univerſe, out of nothing; eſpecially when there was no appearance of its having had a beginning, or coming to an end.

And there mens knowledge ſtopt ſhort, and their religion could go no farther; and conſequently wanted the only foundation on which religion can ſtand, as nothing beſides this can give the ſupreme being that ſovereign authority, without which the higheſt deity can be no proper object of ſupreme worſhip and adoration. For unleſs all are his abſolute property, he can have no right to diſpoſe of them. Nor is it conceivable, how abſolute property can be acquired but by creation.

As to what they had either to hope or to fear from this their imaginary deity, they muſt have been, and all the Heathen actually were, abſolutely at a loſs. But creation, once admitted, a pretty conſiſtent and comprehenſive ſyſtem of religion might have been formed.

ed. Yet until it was certainly proved, that all things were the works of one intelligent and ſuperlatively wiſe being, no inferences could be made about his character. And even then it muſt have remained a moot point at beſt, whether death did not make a full end of the man? The obvious preſumptions lie on the affirmative ſide; and all the arguments for a future ſtate can never be made to riſe ſo high as a fair probability; as might eaſily be ſhewn. Nothing but a plain declaration of the creator's mind can inſure the momentous point.

7. *The Bible way of teaching compared with the Philoſophical.*

WHat reaſon could never give any account of, Moſes, even abſtracting from the prophets and apoſtles, has ſet in the cleareſt light; and that by a method infinitely more proper for anſwering the end. For ſhould we be even ſo enormouſly liberal, as to allow the philoſophical arguments all the ſtrength they pretend to, they can be of no manner of uſe

uſe to the generality of mankind, unleſs they were to take the philoſopher's word for the truth of his concluſions; which is a ſort of implicit faith no man has a right to demand of his fellow-creatures: and even the philoſopher himſelf will find, that his own belief laſts no longer than the force of his demonſtrations keeps warm upon his mind; and even then the evidence is too ſubtile to make an impreſſion ſtrong enough to exclude all the grounds of doubt on the other ſide. Something groſſer, and better ſuited to our perceptive powers, will be found needful to eſtabliſh a firm perſuaſion of what lies beyond our ſenſes and common obſervation.

Moſes has laid to our hands a ſet of palpable facts, which fully anſwer the purpoſe. If his firſt aſſertion, that God created the heavens and the earth, ſtartles our underſtandings at firſt, and carries us quite beyond the ſphere of human obſervation, and, conſequently, of human reaſon; he reconciles us to it, firſt by dwelling upon it, and making it familiar to us, by a detail of the ſix days creation, and particularly the creation of man; and afterwards inſtructs it by ſuch ſenſible facts as have incomparably

incomparably more weight than all the metaphyſical demonſtrations, though ten times more and ſtronger than they are, can ever be made to have, by all the improvements they are capable of receiving.

The particular detail of the ſix days creation, and the manner in which the order was eſtabliſhed, at once brings to our obſervation a ſort of power we were utter ſtrangers to; and is found to be the very truth of, what philoſophers have tortured themſelves with gueſſing at, the true ſyſtem, and the moving powers in this ſyſtem, we find ourſelves involved in.

The manner in which the order of the univerſe was eſtabliſhed, has nothing in it that ſhocks human reaſon, unleſs it is the aſtoniſhing eaſe with which it was effected, viz. by a mere command or volition that things ſhould be ſo and ſo. But when we find that every thing is really ſo as it was then commanded or willed to be, this naturally leads us to the conception of a power infinitely above what the moſt complete man could ever have imagined; and, at the ſame time, a power which may eaſily be ſuppoſed adequate to the creation of the

matter

matter itſelf, which was with ſo much eaſe digeſted into this beautiful fabrick.

The creation of man, the authority aſſumed over him in his primæval ſtate, and the conſequences of it, even by the ſhort hints which are recorded, bring us yet nearer, and make creating power more familiar to us; all which, we have good reaſon to think, were fully explained to, and underſtood by, thoſe who were perſonally concerned in thoſe tranſactions. Eſpecially the fixing the permanent ſtate of mankind by a judicial ſentence, could be done by none but the creator and abſolute proprietor both of man, and of the earth, on which he lived.

But mankind in the firſt ages were the ſame fooliſh perverſe creatures they are ſtill: Though they had the ſtrongeſt documents in their firſt father's caſe, that it was impoſſible for them, or indeed any creature, to ſubſiſt any other way than by the mere grace of their creator, and in an abſolute reſignation to his authority and will; yet in a tract of time they came fooliſhly to neglect and forſake him; which gave occaſion to a ſenſible demonſtration, that he was indeed the creator and abſolute pro-

prietor of them, and of the earth, which they had imagined their own, by reducing it to its primitive ſtate, (which could not be done but by ſuſpending all the ſupporting powers in nature), and by beginning a new origination of mankind.

From the uſe of ſacrifices during this period, which could never have entered into any one's head without a divine inſtitution, it appears, that there was a revelation then ſubſiſting, nearly the ſame with the Chriſtian, and a life beyond the grave brought to light. This was ſenſibly inſtructed, by the tranſlation of Enoch; and by what Noah practiſed immediately after the flood, with the promiſes given, or rather renewed, to him on that occaſion; eſpecially the ſetting aſide the blood, as an atonement for their lives and ſouls, with the reaſons then given for it.

To ſay nothing of the ſeparation of Abraham and his ſeed, where he ſhewed himſelf abſolute ſovereign, or of the deſtruction of Sodom by his immediate hand; the methods he took with Pharaoh in Egypt to make that proud monarch know JEHOVAH, where all the powers of nature were controlled to anſwer his purpoſe, effectually inſtruct, that he

he was indeed the creator, and conſequently the abſolute proprietor of heaven and earth. To which might be added, the aſtoniſhing manner in which the Iſraelites were brought into the poſſeſſion of the land of Canaan, the appearances he made in their favour, and his conduct toward them all along to the captivity. In their hiſtory we have not only the fulleſt documents of a particular providence; but, in numerous inſtances, the exertion of a power ſo ſimilar to that of creation, as leaves no room to doubt of it.

And hence we find the prophets, in his name, always making God and the creator ſynonymous terms; and the God of Iſrael proving himſelf the only true God, by his being creator; and his being creator, by declaring not only what was paſt, but likewiſe what was to come; which we may ſay, with aſſurance, could not be done, unleſs he had the direction of all in his own hands.

It is from theſe plain facts that the divine character is adjuſted in the ſacred writings, and his perfections deduced and inſtructed, in the ſimpleſt and eaſieſt man-

ner, perfectly level to the very meaneſt capacities.

8. *The character of the Deity as Creator, and the ſtate of the creature ariſing from it.*

THough the inviſible God can by no means be perceived by men, until he manifeſts himſelf by ſuch works and ways as can fall under our obſervation, nor any farther than he thus manifeſts himſelf; yet ſo far as we can be ſure that ſuch works are really his, we may thence gather as much of his real character as is diſcovered in them, in the ſame manner as we form the characters of men by their works and ways. And when he is once known to be the creator of all, and that the ſtupendous frame of this univerſe was raiſed by him out of nothing; that is, without any matter to work upon, or inſtruments to work by; we have the higheſt demonſtration of almighty power that can poſſibly be imagined. But this muſt have appeared impoſſible to every created mind; as it did to the wiſeſt of the ancient philoſophers, and muſt have done ſo

to

to all their ſucceſſors, had not their minds been opened and enlightened, as they now are, by analogous facts recorded in the moſt authentic and beſt-vouched hiſtory that ever was written. For though it may be pretended, that the creation of a finite world will not be a proper evidence of infinite power; yet it is a ſtrong preſumption, that there is nothing impoſſible with God: and beſides, as there is nothing in being but what he brought into exiſtence, there can be nothing to limit his powers, but his own perfect wiſdom and underſtanding; by which he muſt know perfectly what is fit and proper to be done.

I ſay, his perfect wiſdom and underſtanding, which muſt bear an exact proportion to his power. Every defect is an imperfection; and every imperfection implies a limitation; and conſequently a defect of power: ſo that, in truth, whatever ſome minute philoſophers have ſurmiſed to the contrary, perfect power carries in it abſolute perfection of every kind. Nor can it be otherwiſe: For there is nothing knowable but himſelf, and the things which he hath made. None who believes the creator to be an intelligent being, can

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ſuſpect his want of a perfect knowledge of himſelf, and his own perfections and powers: and ſure he muſt have the moſt perfect and thorough knowledge of what himſelf hath made.

In this comprehenſive knowledge is founded what we call *wiſdom;* which indeed is no more but the knowledge of what is fit and proper to be done; or, what are the beſt and moſt excellent deſigns, and the fitteſt and moſt proper means for effecting them. There have been a ſet of men, who, in the pride of what they call philoſophy, have boldly taken upon them to chalk out the meaſures of divine wiſdom, and to define poſitively what the creator may or may not do; and if their meaſures are not preciſely obſerved, to give names to his conduct not fit to be repeated. The ſum of all comes to this: That were the creator no wiſer, and knew no better, than they, he would think and act as they imagine he ſhould. And pitiable indeed would the world be under ſuch direction.

But we are not left to the imaginations of men in forming our conceptions of divine wiſdom. We have it fairly ſet before us in the frame of this ſenſible univerſe; and,

and, by the work, may judge of him who wrought it. But how little can we make of it? Some of the groſs outlines which fall under our obſervation, the wonderful mechaniſm of vegetable and animal bodies, and much more the ſtupendous mechaniſm of the heavens, under the influence of which all is managed and directed, have ſtrangely raiſed the pride of philoſophy: but how unjuſtly do they value themſelves on their pretended knowledge; while the ſecret ſprings, by which all is directed, are as much hid from them as from the meaneſt of the vulgar? Theſe remain ſtill, and are like to remain for ever, the ſubject of aſtoniſhment and admiration of that inconceivable wiſdom which erected the ſtupendous machine, and eſtabliſhed every part in ſuch exactneſs of order, that nothing but ignorance, and its common attendant vanity, can find the leaſt flaw or weakneſs in it. The man who certainly knows what purpoſes the creator deſigned to anſwer by the order he has eſtabliſhed, which men learned to call by the unmeaning word *nature*, and *the courſe of nature*, may, and he only can, pretend to judge of the works of God.

Perfect

Perfect wiſdom, and perfect power, thus eſſentially united in the creator, preſent us with a perfect character; ſuch as an indifferent ſpectator of any judgement, if there were any ſuch, muſt eſteem, revere, and love. And in theſe all worſhip lies. External worſhip is only the outward ſign and expreſſion of them. This perfection of character is the ſame with what is commonly called *goodneſs*; a term ill underſtood, and much miſtaken, in forming our conceptions of the all-perfect being. As it is from the model every man carries in his own mind, that all our notions of divine perfections are formed, and as our bias is ſo irreſiſtibly ſtrong to the preſervation of life, and the enjoyments of it; thence we take our meaſures of good and evil; and imagine nothing can be good but what is good to us, or rather contributes to what we reckon good for us. But real goodneſs is quite another thing: it is a perfect, conſtant, and unchangeable love to what a perfect infallible underſtanding knows to be really good, and an equal abhorrence of all that is evil. What is good or what is evil to God, none but himſelf can ſay; or rather we muſt conceive of his perfection

tion as abſolutely above being affected by any thing without himſelf, as he muſt be incapable either of any addition to or diminution of his pleaſure and happineſs. It is only among creatures that good and evil in this view can be found. What promotes the real happineſs of the creature muſt be good, and what marrs it muſt be evil, in the creator's eye: and of this his perfect wiſdom alone can judge. Hence perfect goodneſs muſt be the moſt terrible attribute to an ill being; as he who is poſſeſſed of it, muſt as certainly deſtroy the evil, as cheriſh the good.

It is hardly neceſſary to obſerve, that the creator of all muſt certainly be the abſolute proprietor of every being; and conſequently poſſeſſed of an abſolute right to diſpoſe of them, and employ them to what purpoſes he pleaſes; that is, as his perfect wiſdom ſees meet and fit. No creature can be poſſeſſed of any property in this view, not ſo much as their own life or being, any farther than as a truſt committed to them of pure ſovereign grace; and he has a perfect right to call them to an account for the improvement. Hence the fundamental law of nature, No creature

can ſubſiſt but by the mere grace and good pleaſure of the creator: none of them have, or can ever acquire, any right to plead upon, unleſs he is pleaſed to give it by a free ſovereign act of grace.

And being thus the abſolute ſovereign, nothing can be more abſurd than to confine his adminiſtration to the meaſures of moral government; that is, to the meaſures of human wiſdom: the higheſt preſumption a creature can be guilty of, unleſs he had condeſcended to declare, that he would follow ſome ſuch meaſures. What changes he ſees fit to make in his world, at what time, and in what manner, are queſtions the higheſt order of creatures can ſay nothing upon. But we are ſure he may do what he pleaſes with his own: and none has a right to aſk his reaſons; which indeed cannot be comprehended by any underſtanding leſs perfect than his own.

Theſe are ſuch plain truths, that it can hardly be imagined, any one ſhould entertain the leaſt doubt of them who believes the creation. But there are many things we have no doubt of, and of the greateſt moment too, which yet are ſo little minded, as not at all to influence us either in our

ſpeculations

ſpeculations or actions. We find ourſelves ſome how in poſſeſſion of what we call *being* and *life*, with certain perfections and powers, which we look upon as properly our own, and accordingly value ourſelves upon them, and are very fond of the gratifications we find they bring in to us; while yet we certainly know, that the next moment may, and in a little time death certainly will, put an end to them all. And whether that does not make a final end of our being, who could have ſaid if the creator had not told us? So abſolutely is every creature in his hand, that it is aſtoniſhing how ſuch an abſurd notion, as the natural immortality of any of them, ſhould ever have entered the head of a reaſonable man; a privilege no being can have, without being independent on the creator.

9. *Certain Truths current in the world, which could never have entered but by Revelation, and the Creator's teſtimony.*

OUR modern philoſophers, and natural theologians, deceive themſelves and their followers. Finding certain facts

generally current in the world, they flatter themſelves into a belief that they are naturally implanted in the human mind: and though all the experience in the world is againſt it, they inſiſt, that they are juſt as natural to man, and as much a part of his conſtitution, as inſtincts are to birds and beaſts. But they are far from being ſo probably accounted for; and will be found to reach no farther than the correſponding animal inſtincts in man; except what is common to both, a capacity of being formed by imitation and cuſtom.

But the ſubject of both can extend no farther than can be brought under obſervation by our perceptive powers. And one of them, viz. hearing, extends to all that has been obſerved by others. Hence information comes to be as natural a mean of knowledge as any of our ſenſes; and without it our knowledge muſt be confined to very narrow bounds. Human knowledge can never reach farther than human obſervation; and whatever exceeds the bounds of that, are to him as if they were not; unleſs he receives information about them from ſome ſuperior being who has obſerved them. And if ſuch facts as

none

none but the creator and ſovereign of the univerſe could poſſibly reveal, are found to be received and firmly believed among men, the record and teſtimony of ſuch facts, where-ever it is found original, without being interlarded with fabulous circumſtances, muſt be a divine revelation.

Creation out of nothing, no mortal ever ſaw, or could ſee; nor could they have any notion of a power in any degree analogous to it, until the creator himſelf was pleaſed to exhibit it in his after works.

No man can know what is paſt, unleſs he himſelf was a witneſs, without ſome record or tradition of it; much leſs what is to come. Yet the books of Moſes, the Prophets, and the writings of the Apoſtles, are full of ſuch facts, and ſuch predictions of things to come, as could never have entered the head of man or angel to imagine poſſible, without them.

The original ſtate of mankind, as deſcribed by the Heathen poets, under what they call the *Golden Age*, ſo contrary to what human nature now is, and ever has been ſince the beginning of the world, could never have entered the moſt lively imagination, had it not been for Moſes's account

account of Paradiſe; and much leſs ſuch a a renovation of it as Virgil deſcribes, plainly copied from the Prophets. But of all things, what could have put it into any one's head, that earth and ſeas, and the heavens themſelves, ſhould at laſt be deſtroyed by fire, as Ovid deſcribes it from the current tradition among the Heathen?

Whether death makes a full and final end of man, as is generally allowed it does of other animals, who could ſay, without an expreſs revelation of the divine purpoſe? Nothing but an overweening partiality to ourſelves could ever have eſtabliſhed the negative; as will eaſily appear from the beſt reaſons philoſophy can provide us in to this day. The only thing that can make an after ſtate conſiſtent, is the reſurrection of the body: A thing almoſt as hard to conceive, as creation out of nothing.

Whether a wiſe and perfectly good creator would pardon a ſinner, or exterminate the evil being out of his world, who can ſay? and yet the divine placability, and forgiveneſs of ſin, have been the general belief of the world from the very beginning: and the way how pardon is to be obtained, and the Deity placated, and rendered propitious

propitious, by ſacrifice, has been as general throughout all ages: The moſt abſurd imagination in the eye of reaſon; yet all the efforts of the wiſeſt and moſt revered philoſophers, could never extirpate the notion of its being a divine inſtitution.

The polytheiſm that was ſo univerſally received, could never have had its riſe from reaſoning; as the perfect poſſeſſion of being and life, with all the powers and perfections of it, cannot poſſibly ſubſiſt but in one. Something may be ſaid for the Heathen, after they had loſt the knowledge of the creator, and ſubſtituted the heavens, and their ſenſible powers, in his room. But whence could the notion of a Trinity in this Unity ariſe? Why three, rather than three hundred? and yet the tradition is very ancient. Plato did not coin it, as appears by his blundering unintelligible account of it: and yet his account is not more blundering than thoſe of our philoſophical divines, who have attempted it, with the advantage of another ſort of light than he had, from obſcure traditions only.

That God ſhould have a Son, what mortal could ſay? and yet the tradition is as

old

old as Nebuchadnezzar's days: and certainly much older; for it appears then to have been commonly received. That this Son of God ſhould be born of a woman, is yet farther from any foundation in reaſoning; and yet the books of the Heathen are full of it; which could never have had its riſe any where but in the original tradition.

We need ſay nothing of the many different methods of purification and cleanſing, by waſhing, ſprinkling of blood, &c. as they could never have been thought of any uſe for purging from moral defilement.

The fabulous appearances of their gods, and their converſations with men; the notion they had of inſpiration, as the riſe and ſpring of all great atchievements, by what they call *ſpirits*, their oracles, &c. are evidently copied. And perhaps the devil might take advantage of man's ignorance, and by apeing the operations of the true God, make himſelf be miſtaken for him, and worſhipped in his ſtead; as ſeems to have been the caſe with the Heathens before and at the time of the coming of the Son of God into the world.

Theſe and ſuch other ſentiments and practices religiouſly received and adhered to;

to; however abſurd and ridiculous they may ſeem, and really were, as practiſed among them, who held them only, as one may, ſay by rote, without knowing the true intent and meaning of them; yet, when run up to their true original, and taken as they ſtand in the Bible, reaſon has nothing to ſay againſt any of them; and ſo much for them, that numbers have been deluded into an imagination, that they could have found out many fundamental ones without any farther aſſiſtance. But as the caſe is demonſtrably otherwiſe in all or moſt of them, the concluſion will come out ſtrong, that none could be the author of theſe writings but the creator, proprietor, and ſovereign, of the world.

10. *The Original State of Mankind.*

I Know not how it has come to be in a manner taken for granted, that the firſt ages of the world were abſolutely barbarous, and men for many ages no better than ſuch ſavages, or worſe, as we meet with in the remote parts of the world; until by length of time, they were civili-

zed by very ſlow degrees. The firſt, and moſt, civilized countries, were Greece and Rome, whoſe anceſtors were certainly ſuch; whence all the reſt of the world paſſed with them for barbarians. And yet it was not, could not be diſſembled, that from theſe ſame barbarians they had all their knowledge; that is, all the facts which ſerved their philoſophers to diſpute, and form gueſſes about. Certain it is, their predeceſſors were of another opinion; for from them they had thoſe charming deſcriptions of the golden age, which degenerated by degrees into braſs and iron, as they came to be ſcattered abroad on the face of the earth, and loſt the knowledge of the original facts, on which all religion and morality, that is, all the right meaſures of human knowledge, were founded; and thus degenerated into a courſe of error and folly. The plain original of that tradition, Moſes gives us in his deſcription of paradiſe, and the ſtate of our firſt parents there, incomparably beyond what the moſt luxurious, and at the ſame time the moſt correct fancy could imagine. The particulars are in every body's hands who will deign to look at them. It is plain,

plain, that garden was a complete abridgement of the univerſe, and a collection of every thing that was valuable there; and ranged too, by perfect wiſdom, into the moſt agreeable and inſtructive order. For thence, without queſtion, man was to gather, or find exemplified, all the works of his creator, which perfect wiſdom ſaw neceſſary in that ſtation. But how far it extended, is impoſſible for us to gueſs by thoſe ſhort hints Moſes has given us. He taught him language, and converſed with him in it; he ſhewed him the things he wanted to know, and directed him to give them names, on which all language is founded; and as it is natural to think they diſplayed their ſeveral natures before him, he had ſuch an opportunity as never another had, of taking in the whole compaſs of what we call natural hiſtory. And thoſe who underſtand the Hebrew language, and the import of the names he gave, will be ſurpriſed at his ſagacity. We have no account of his giving names to the plants and trees of the garden, nor to the heavenly bodies, which were obvious to his ſenſes; but all theſe things were before him, and needed not

to be brought, as the beaſts and birds were. But here a queſtion naturally ariſes, How came the firſt man by all this reaſon and underſtanding, ſo as to be qualified for ſuch a taſk? By his ſenſes indeed, as his body was at firſt formed, he might perceive all the material objects about him; as no doubt the mere brute part of the creation do: and many of them we find endued with far ſtronger, and therefore we may ſay more perfect, organs of ſenſe, ſeeing and hearing particularly. But reaſon and underſtanding are quite of another nature: they are not perceptive powers, but regulate and improve our ſenſible perceptions to purpoſes greatly above what any other animal is capable of. They have feelings ſuch as we have; they have likewiſe ſomething of memory, by which they are capable of acquiring experience to a great degree; and many of them have a natural ſagacity, to which we give the unmeaning name of *inſtinct*; and all we can ſay of it is, that it was given them by their creator in a manner we know no more of, than we do of creation itſelf.

We muſt have ſaid the ſame of man, with

with all his boaſted powers and faculties, only founding the difference in the degrees of fineneſs or coarſeneſs of their different conſtitutions, had it not been for the hints Moſes has left us: which, were they well underſtood as he has laid them, might carry the knowledge of ourſelves farther than is commonly done. Two things he tells us, beſides the ſolemnity uſed at his creation, viz. That man was made in the image of his creator; and, That God breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life. Now there are two things well known in an image of any perſon or thing; a likeneſs, and deſigned repreſentation, of the original; and where there is no acceſs to the original, as in the preſent caſe, it is from the image that we form our apprehenſions. In fact it is ſo: all our notions of the divine perfections, underſtanding, wiſdom, power, goodneſs, &c. are all taken from the ſhadows of them in ourſelves. It were well if it was remembered that the moſt perfect man is but an image, and needs more adjuſting than the wiſeſt philoſopher is capable of making out. And, after all, the divine underſtanding, wiſdom, juſtice, goodneſs, &c. are

are really as different from what we call by theſe names, as almighty creating power is above that faint ſcantling which we enjoy. However the terms by which the divine perfections, and the exertion of them, are expreſſed in language, muſt be taken from ours, or we muſt be quite ſilent; yet the analogy is ſo remote, that it would be very bad reaſoning to draw inferences from the ſimilarity.

A variety of gueſſes have been made about this ſimilarity and likeneſs. Some have imagined it lay in the dominion that was given him over the creatures: but by the account Moſes gives us, that was a dignity granted to the man after he was completely made. Others, with more probability, place it in what they call his moral perfections; and think they have the apoſtle's authority to make it conſiſt in knowledge, righteouſneſs, and holineſs; but theſe are rather the reſult of his conſtitution and perfect frame.

Moſes has told us, that his body was created out of the duſt, and the creator breathed the breath of life into his noſtrils: which ſeems to teach us, that we are not to look for this image, either in body

body or ſoul ſeparately, as they are commonly diſtinguiſhed; but in the whole man, as he was created perfect. And accordingly we find the terms made uſe of by the creator in his addreſſes to man, are promiſcuouſly taken from both the intellectual and bodily parts of man.

The manner in which the great poſſeſſor of being ſubſiſts, in the perfect enjoyment of all the powers of life, muſt be an abſolute ſecret to us, who know ſo little of our own; nor is it likely that any the moſt perfect creature, the poſſeſſor only of a borrowed and dependent being, can form any tolerable notion of it. And therefore to pretend to reaſon, from the ſtate of ſuch imperfect beings, muſt be at once unfair and fooliſh. And yet as a trinity, in the moſt perfect and undivided unity, is plainly enough aſſerted, and every where ſuppoſed, in the record he hath condeſcended to make of himſelf, under the titles of Father, Son, and Spirit, it might be expected there ſhould be ſome faint ſhadow of it in his image.

Thoſe who have but glanced at the mechaniſm of the human fabrick, muſt have diſcovered there three ſyſtems, very different,

rent, and deſigned to anſwer quite different purpoſes; and yet all conſiſting of the ſame ſubſtance perfectly united, ſubſiſting and acting in and by one another; the firſt for taking in and diſtributing proper food for ſubſiſtence, the ſecond for bringing the objects we are concerned in under our obſervation, and the third for exerting the animal powers into action.

But thoſe who look further, and take the whole man together, will find a more perfect trinity inlaid in his very frame. The foundation, and as it were the root and ſpring, of all, is laid in his life and being, with the powers belonging to it; the ſecond conſiſts in perceptive powers, by which the bodily ſenſes are employed, and informations taken in to carry our pittance of knowledge as far as it will go; the third conſiſts of active powers, for accompliſhing what the informations we take in, diſcover to be proper and neceſſary. To the firſt of theſe the firſt animal ſyſtem we mentioned is analogous, to the ſecond the ſecond, and to the third the third. Whether this may contribute any thing toward removing the difficulty of a trinity in unity, and which is indeed the only

only one that we know nothing like, and cannot conceive how it can be, may be conſidered by ſuch as have ability and leiſure.

But the queſtion ſtill remains, How man, a being made out of the duſt of the earth, came by all theſe amazing qualities? The ſhort anſwer is, By the amazing wiſdom and power of his creator. But how creating power operates, who could have been ſo mad as to inquire, had not Moſes told us, that after the body was made, the creator breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life, and man became a living ſoul; or more properly, a living frame; as the ſame word in that language is oftener uſed to denote the body, than the ſpiritual part? However, the words are certainly deſigned to teach us ſomething about the human conſtitution. The word which our tranſlators render *life* is plural in the original; plainly enough pointing us to the communication of another life different from the animal; and perhaps to a third kind, as much above the rational, by the indwelling and influence of the Divine Spirit. And the original will bear to be tranſlated, "he breathed "into him, [or inſpired him with] the ſpirit

" of lives; and by that, Adam became a li-
" ving man." This provides us with a word which ſeems to expreſs ſo much, as we find it uſed, Job xxxii. 8. " The *inſpi-*
" *ration* of the Almighty giveth under-
" ſtanding," and " holy men of God
" ſpake as they were moved by the Holy
" Ghoſt." A ſenſible effect of this we have in the apoſtles on the day of Pentecoſt. Which leads us as far into the myſtery of the thing, as we are capable of forming any apprehenſions of: for how the Holy Spirit works, we can know nothing but by the effects produced by it.

This much however we may learn from it, that the creator can by his ſpirit raiſe whom he will, even the moſt ignorant, to what meaſures of knowledge and underſtanding, and the perfections which depend on them, he pleaſeth; approaching more or leſs toward perfection; for even the Apoſtle Paul tells us, he knew but in part; perfect knowledge being reſerved to an after ſtate, when he propoſed to know even as he was known. And we need not ſcruple to ſay, that every man who lives in the world, is more or leſs inſpired, becauſe that is the only way by which life can be conveyed and maintained. Jeſus Chriſt,

Chriſt, the Son of God, who has the diſpenſing of this ſpirit, is ſaid to be the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world; though, at the ſame time, it muſt be remembered, that there is another ſpirit which worketh powerfully in the children of diſobedience, and by their very different works they are known.

What meaſure of this ſpirit the firſt man had in his paradiſiacal ſtate, is hard to ſay from the ſhort hints we have of his hiſtory in that ſtation; which, though ſhort upon the whole, yet ſeems to have continued longer than is commonly allowed: but this we may ſay with aſſurance, that he had as much as the duty of his ſtation required; for it is to be obſerved, that the good and righteous creator never lays any commands upon his creatures, until he has put them in ſuch circumſtances, that every duty ariſes naturally out of them. Our firſt father found himſelf at his firſt entrance on being, with every thing that could contribute to the moſt perfect enjoyment of life, and all the neceſſary powers to make the beſt of them: he found himſelf at the head of the new

creation, where there was no mate for him to be found, until his creator bountifully provided him with one: and, which is infinitely more, he found himſelf honoured with his creator's friendſhip, and familiar converſation, and inſtructions. What meaſures of gratitude and love could anſwer ſuch benefactions; when, even under all the corruptions his poſterity are ſunk into, they cannot help loving thoſe that love them, and being ſenſibly affected with the benefits they receive? Thus was the law written in his heart; and he was, in ſtrict propriety, a law to himſelf.

Hence we may take a hint toward the deciſion of that vexatious queſtion, concerning human liberty. No body makes the leaſt doubt, that every man is at perfect liberty ſo far as his powers go. Nor will it be denied, that he is ſo made as neceſſarily to be determined by the moſt prevalent motive. So far, then, as he has power to weigh and balance the ſeveral motives for or againſt any action, ſo far he is perfectly free; and where ſuch powers are wanting or defective, ſo far he is, and muſt be, a ſlave to the prevailing power; which in fact is the caſe with mankind now in numberleſs

numberleſs inſtances, where ignorance or inattention gives ſuch advantage to the flattering affections and paſſions, as to make the moſt trifling gratification outweigh a crown of glory, and eternal happineſs.

This was not, could not be, the caſe of the firſt man. His powers extended as far as his duty did, until the fatal trial came; where one cannot properly ſay his wiſdom failed, (for the Apoſtle aſſures us he was not deceived); but his paſſion was ſo ſtrong, as to make him run into the danger with his eyes open, and perfectly free in all other reſpects.

And this leads to another conſideration, which is not commonly ſo much minded as its obviouſneſs requires: That notwithſtanding all the perfection and happineſs of the paradiſiacal ſtate, it was never deſigned to be the permanent ſtate of mankind, but to introduce that which was to be ſo; as fully appears by the event; unleſs we can imagine the creator ſo little acquainted with his own works, as to find his purpoſes baffled at firſt ſetting out; and as ſome have very unwarily repreſented him, neceſſitated by this accident to have recourſe to a new remedial

remedial law, which ſhould ſupply the defects, and thereby ſet aſide the old one, which perfect wiſdom had at firſt ſeen fit to eſtabliſh: that is, in plain Engliſh, he was forced either to make himſelf a liar, or to deſtroy his favourite creature. The laws of the creator are not like thoſe of weak ſhort-ſighted man, which muſt be altered and amended as unforeſeen events caſt up to him. As the views of perfect underſtanding can have no bounds, known unto God are all his works from the beginning; and heaven and earth may ſooner paſs away, than the leaſt jot or tittle of the divine law, any conſtitution or order of the all-wiſe creator, until the whole is finiſhed. Whatever plans therefore the wiſdom of man has formed for him, which ſuppoſe any the leaſt alteration, or, as ſome call it, diſpenſing with any part of his law, muſt be falſe and erroneous, and a preſumptuous reflection on divine wiſdom, whoſe plan is ſo perfect, that every ſtep makes way for another, until the whole deſign is completed; many of which, in the detached light wherein we view them, ſeem to have a quite contrary tendency.

Nothing can be more fooliſh than to put caſe

caſes which never did nor could happen; unleſs it be the making grave inferences from them. Such certainly is the inquiry, What ſhould have been the caſe of our firſt parents and their poſterity had they perſiſted in their primitive integrity? Man had no promiſe of any other life than what he was then in poſſeſſion of, nor even of the continuance of that any farther than was implied in the threatening, which aſſured him he ſhould die whenever he ſhould eat of that fruit: but that gave no aſſurance that the creator never would reſume the life he had given, if he ſaw it fit. So that in every view we can take of their caſe, it muſt be at leaſt a very improper way of ſpeaking, that they were to *work* for life by the covenant they were then under; which can have no foundation but on the precarious ſuppoſition, that when their ſtate of probation, as it is called, was finiſhed, they ſhould have been tranſplanted into a higher ſtate of dignity and happineſs, ſomething like that which mankind have now a grant of in Jeſus Chriſt. Whereas, in fact, we find, that the continuance of even the life they had, was not put upon *doing* of any kind, but upon

upon the *forbearing* to eat of the fruit of a certain tree; and that was the only event in which they had any reaſon to fear the death which was threatened.

Of a piece with this, and another part of the ſame plan, is the conſtruction put upon the threatening, viz. That the death which was thus peremptorily threatened, extended not only to the death of the body, or the extinction of the ſpiritual life in the ſoul, but to eternal death; the very ſame puniſhment which we find threatened againſt thoſe who will not believe the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt.

It is ſurpriſing how any one could miſs of what is the very obvious conſequence of this, viz. that it muſt have been utterly impoſſible for any of mankind to be ſaved; as impoſſible as it was for the God of truth to lie, or any conſtitution or law of his to be ſet aſide until it had its full effect. This has forced the aſſerters into ſuch a maze as requires infinitely more metaphyſical ſkill to comprehend their meaning, than falls to every man's ſhare. And ſuch will always be the fate of thoſe who will be wiſe above what is written. I would not be thought to extenuate the demerit of ſin, which is

in

in its very nature the death of the man: but the queſtion is not, What puniſhment ſin deſerves? but, What puniſhment the creator had decreed upon the commiſſion of ſin; an event which he certainly foreſaw would happen, and that too in a ſhort time, very preciſely known to himſelf?

The account we have in the record is plain and ſimple, obvious to every one's underſtanding; and the obvious meaning of the threatening appears to be, that man ſhould loſe, or that an end ſhould be put to all that life which he then enjoyed; but it does not ſay how the creator meant to diſpoſe of him afterward; whether to leave him there, or to raiſe him up again to another life, and another way of living. This his denunciation, peremptory as it was, left entirely in his own hand. And in fact we are aſſured by the record, that he had then, and had from everlaſting, provided another head for mankind, for raiſing them up, and conveying to them eternal life in his bleſſed Son, that divine perſon afterwards known in the world by the name of *Jeſus Chriſt*; of whom Adam in Paradiſe was only a figure, or a ſort of ſenſible image and repreſentation, for helping us with greater eaſe to form ſome proper apprehenſions

of him, as the Apoſtle Paul aſſures us.

Did we know what life is, and could we talk intelligibly upon it, we would ſee how exactly the threatening is fulfilled. But though we know not what life is, yet there are two kinds of being, viz. the animal, and the vegetable, where we can perceive how life is ſupported; namely, by their connection with the material ſyſtem, and the influences of the heavens. Whenever the ſap is no more raiſed in vegetables, and the animal can no longer breathe, though not an atom of their ſubſtance is annihilated, yet they are dead, there is an end put to that ſtate which we call *life*. I know not how we have got ourſelves ſo bigotted in the notion that ſpirits cannot die. For though it may be true, that they cannot die, as bodies do, by a diſſolution of parts; yet if their life lies in their connection with a ſpiritual ſyſtem, (and it muſt either do ſo, or they muſt be ſelf-exiſtent and independent beings); whenever that connection is broken, there muſt be an end put to their life, and they made incapable of that way of living for which that connection qualified them.

We need not amuſe ourſelves with looking for any other ſpiritual ſyſtem, but the fullneſs

fullneſs and all-ſufficiency of the creator. And if the ſpiritual life is maintained by the divine ſpirit, as the animal life is by the material; whenever that ſpirit is withdrawn from man, there is an end of his life and vital powers: his connection with the ſpiritual ſyſtem is broken; and the man is, to all intents and purpoſes, as dead to the ſpiritual world, as if one of us were totally diveſted of his rational powers, and ſunk down to a mere animal ſtate. The animal would be alive; but we would all ſay the man is dead.

Here we have reaſon to expect a terrible cry, raiſed by our philoſophical divines and patrons of moral government: What a horrible view, will they ſay, does this give us of the ſovereign of the univerſe? Where is the juſtice, to ſay nothing of goodneſs, to require ſuch duties of the creature as he has no power to perform? What if I ſhould aſk, where hath God required any ſuch duties, either of Adam or his children? for I do not think it a good anſwer to ſay, We had ſuch powers in Adam. We muſt certainly take the divine law preciſely as God hath laid it in the record: and there I find no duties required of Adam's mere children, that is, ſuch as

have no other life but what they derive from him, but only to deny themſelves, to take up their croſs, and to follow Chriſt: and that is no more, than to acknowledge themſelves to be, what they really are, dead to God, and very ſoon to be dead to the world; and fly to the relief their gracious creator has prepared in his bleſſed Son; where they are aſſured of finding an infinitely better life, than ever Adam could have any notion of, and of being more cloſely united to the fountain of life; in the virtue of which, all God's commandments are ſo far from being grievous, that they are all pleaſantneſs and peace. For the love of God ſhed abroad in the heart, writes every one of them there, deep and ſtrong, in the one great law of love.

As this was by far the principal part of man's paradiſiacal life, when he loſt the ſpiritual life, the threatening was literally fulfilled, in the very day, nay, the very moment, he ſinned; when in the very nature of the thing, by turning away from God to the creature, he forſook the fountain of life, and the only way in which a ſpirit can live. But they carry the Hebrew phraſe too far, who make it import any more

more than the certainty of the event, without ſpecifying the time when it ſhould be inflicted. Thus it was appointed for all men once to die; and thence it becomes every one's duty to acquieſce in this order, as we find it conſtructed and enforced by the great judge, who himſelf was the lawgiver, and certainly beſt underſtood his own deed.

But why ſhould the beneficent creator be ſo cruel, as to give his favourite creature ſuch a tranſient glance of happineſs, as only ſerved to condemn him and his poſterity to endleſs regret for the loſs of it? why put the fortunes of all mankind in one man's hand, and puniſh them for a crime they neither were, nor could be conſcious of, far leſs acceſſory to? With theſe, and a number of other ſuch queſtions, men who would be counted very wiſe, have puzzled themſelves and others. It is really amazing how ſuch puny things as the wiſeſt and moſt learned of mankind certainly are, ſhould ever have arrived at ſuch a pitch of inſolence, as to put queſtions to their creator; a greater abſurdity, ſurely, than if the clay ſhould ſay to the potter, Why haſt thou made me thus?

Certain

Certain it is, that the preſent ſtate, whatever it be, is that which the creator has allotted to this order of his creatures. And had none of them ever been in any higher or better, who could have had any reaſon to complain? It is true, many men of great piety and learning have declared it inconſiſtent with the divine perfections, and of courſe impoſſible, that ſuch a creature could have come out of his hands. But when they are put upon anſwering a very natural queſtion in this view, How then came he there? no wonder they are greatly embarraſſed: and embarraſſed they muſt be, when they are forced to reply, That God could not hinder our firſt parents from falling, without breaking in upon that liberty which they ſay was abſolutely neceſſary in a ſtate of probation: for what hurt could it have done their liberty, to have given them as much wiſdom as to have counterbalanced the temptation?

But this ſame ſtate of probation it were much to be wiſhed were better explained than is uſually done. The notion commonly annexed to it, that the creator treated his creatures as kings do their ſubjects when they are put upon their good behaviour,

behaviour, is certainly wrong. The omniſcient creator knew moſt certainly what would be the event, and needed not put it to the trial: and we are very ſure perfect wiſdom does nothing in vain. But probation in another view was very proper; viz. that the creature might know itſelf; and how impoſſible it is, even for the moſt perfect creature, to ſubſiſt in the moſt perfect enjoyment of life, in any other way than by mere grace, and the free unmerited exertion of divine power for ſupporting it in that condition. Greater advantages cannot be imagined than our firſt parents enjoyed; nor eaſier terms propoſed, than, in the midſt of an infinite variety of fruits, to forbear the eating of one: For ſure, if they could not do that, they could do nothing at all.

And hence ariſes another leſſon, of equal importance and uſe; that ſuch a treaſure as life could never be ſafely truſted in the hand of any mere man; A truth neceſſary to be adverted to, as it is in effect the only mean which can effectually recommend the unſpeakable goodneſs, and indulgent care of the creator, in lodging life in a hand where it could

could not poſſibly be forfeited, the hand of his own only begotten Son.

And this opens to us a reaſon for introducing the permanent ſtate of mankind in this manner; namely, as was before hinted, to provide us in a figure or image, by which we might be enabled to form ſome proper conceptions of *him*, who ſtands at the head of mankind in relation to the ſpiritual and eternal world, as the firſt man did in relation to this preſent periſhing one. Adam was intruſted with all that life which was ever to be conveyed to his natural deſcendents; and through him it will be derived to the lateſt poſterity, in the courſe of what we call *natural generation.*

To him the terms of life were given; and by his failure in the obſervance of them, the fate of all his poſterity was unalterably determined, by the judgement which was paſſed upon his fall: A ſtate in which it is glaringly impoſſible for any of Adam's race, falling into the original error, to flatter themſelves with the hope of eternal life by any other means, than the free grace of the creator, who can, and who alone can, raiſe the dead, and beſtow what

meaſures

meaſures of perfection and happineſs he pleaſes.

We may yet add another conſideration of no ſmall moment. Had man never known of any higher and happier ſtate than the preſent, he would naturally have reſted here, as the ſtation the creator had allotted him; whereas the account given us of the paradiſiacal ſtate, while it cauſeth us to regret the loſs we have ſuſtained, has a native tendency to open the heart for relief. And we have there ſuch a fair figure of the heavenly paradiſe, that many have ſtumbled into a very wrong notion, that we have nothing more to expect from Chriſt, but a reſtoration of what we loſt by Adam.

Moſes's account of the ſeduction on which the tranſgreſſion was founded, has occaſioned a great profuſion of looſe wit, which might all have been ſpared, had the narrative, and the circumſtances in which it was written, been conſidered with any degree of attention.

Eve's character is marked with a great deal of honeſt unſuſpecting ſimplicity. The temptation, every body muſt own, was conducted with the utmoſt ſtretch of ſubtilty. The ſerpent's ſubtilty we

find marked by a greater than Moſes. This Eve might know; and finding the ſerpent buſy about the fruit; its ſpeaking and reaſoning gave great colour to the temptation, and made it much eaſier to believe the effects it might have upon her huſband and her. But to thoſe for whom Moſes wrote, it was ſtrong evidence that a higher and more ſubtile being was concerned. The only fault that can be found in the narrative is its conciſeneſs; but it is more than likely the whole was then ſo familiarly known by tradition, that there was no need of being more particular. And for after ages, we have it ſufficiently explained by the epithet of *the old ſerpent* affixed to the tempter.

I only obſerve further, that however currently the title of *the grand apoſtaſy* is by moſt men affixed to the fall of our firſt parents, it is never applied ſo in the whole courſe of the record, but always denotes mens falling off from that ſtate the creator graciouſly entered them into, when they were driven out of the earthly paradiſe.

But the immediate conſequences of that firſt tranſgreſſion, the horrour and anguiſh which muſt have ſeized our firſt parents when the hurry of the temptation was over,

cannot

cannot poſſibly be imagined by any being, even the moſt rational, who has not had the experience of the pleaſure and delight which they found in the intercourſes of friendſhip with their creator. An honeſt mind, wheedled into an act of rebellion againſt a moſt gracious ſovereign, to whoſe friendſhip he owed the enjoyment of the moſt perfect earthly happineſs, and who had a numerous beloved family depending upon him, and expoſed to beggary, and all the miſery conſequent upon it; the remorſe and anguiſh of ſuch a perſon may give ſome faint image of their diſtreſs; but as much fainter than that of our firſt progenitors, as there is no ſovereign like the creator for worth, nor any who can ſhow ſuch friendſhip, and confer ſuch favours as he had done. What then muſt they have felt, now that all was loſt, and, ſo far as they could judge, irretrievably loſt.

I ſay irretrievably loſt; for in this light it muſt have appeared to them, Nay more, had all the creatures been called upon to give their verdict, they muſt have been of the ſame mind. The law was expreſs, without any limitation or ſalvo. If juſtice ſhould be mellowed into mercy, ſtill the truth of God, who

cannot lie, bound the criminals to ſuffer what he had poſitively ſaid ſhould be the puniſhment of their tranſgreſſion.

No room was left for transferring guilt, or for any vicarious puniſhment; and yet leſs, if poſſible, for fulfilling the law by a ſubſtitute or ſurety: for indeed the law which brought them under death, was of ſuch a nature, that it could never be fulfilled at all when once it was broken: it was not upon perfect obedience to the whole will of God, but upon that particular command, to forbear the forbidden fruit, that their life or death was made to depend. So that, upon the whole, there was no hope for the offenders but one, which no creature could entertain, viz. that the creator, in his free ſovereign grace, ſhould raiſe them from the dead; that is, create them anew, and enter them into a new life, and a new way of living ſuitable to the nature and deſign of it; as we find hath been done in Jeſus Chriſt the mediator.

Accordingly their caſe, as repreſented by Moſes, appears a diſmal reverſe of their former ſtate. The voice of their creator, which was wont to fill them with pleaſure and joy unſpeakable, now filled them with terror; and all the poor relief they had,

was

was to keep themſelves out of his ſight. And had not he, in his wonderful condeſcenſion, ſought them, they had been for ever cut off from him who is the fountain of life, and dead to all intents and purpoſes, but thoſe of the poor animal life; reduced to live, as the beaſts of the field do, merely on this outward ſenſible world. And that is all that any of their poſterity are capable of, until they be created anew in Chriſt Jeſus.

However *we*, their thoughtleſs poſterity, who know no better, may pleaſe ourſelves with theſe low gratifications, it muſt have been impoſſible for *them* to have ſubſiſted in the circumſtances wherein they found themſelves: and accordingly their merciful creator did not leave them long to languiſh in ſuch uncertainty. They were immediately called into judgement. What was to be in all time coming the ſtate of mankind, was then unalterably fixed by the great ſovereign; and in the ſentence pronounced upon the ſerpent, a door of hope was opened to the criminals, and the memorial of the promiſed ſeed of the woman kept up, in the antipathy which then commenced between the inſtrument of ſeduction and the ordinary deſcendents of the tranſgreſſors. And

as

as the ſentence of death is literally fulfilled in all the deſcendents of Adam, that alone carries along with it a ſtrong confirmation of the bruiſing the ſerpent's head, or, as we find the Apoſtle John explains it, deſtroying the works of the devil, viz. *ſin*, and *death*; and conſeqently of the bringing in of a new and unperiſhable life. And hence the notions of the divine placability, of immortality, and of life after the body is diſſolved to duſt, have obtained in all ages and nations of the world; which never could have entered the heart of man any other way.

II. *The Character of Jeſus Chriſt.*

IT is common with our hiſtory-writers, to give characters of the principal perſons concerned in the tranſactions they relate. But unleſs theſe are true pictures drawn from the life, of the conduct and behaviour of the man in every caſe, they are only the opinions of the writer, and are very little regarded by wiſe readers. To get then at the true character of Jeſus, it will not be ſufficient to know what this or the other man ſaid or thought of him, but

but what the whole tenor of his life ſhows him to have been. We have his hiſtory given us in the moſt authentic manner ever any was; and with many advantages no other ever had; which it is not our preſent buſineſs to conſider, but to take it as it lies before us in a record made by the peculiar direction and influence of the ſpirit of truth.

The hiſtory of his life is not like that of other men, from his birth to his death; but extends a great way backward before he made his appearance in the world, and forward after he left it; which indeed are the principal parts, as his appearance in this world was ſo mean and unſightly, that thoſe who judged only by this world's meaſures, could perceive no form nor comelineſs in him wherefore he ſhould be deſired. He was long before deſcribed in prophecy as a man of ſorrows and acquainted with griefs; and at laſt condemned and crucified as one of the baſeſt malefactors; and had it not been for what followed, he had been at leaſt reckoned, as the learned Jews ſaid he was, a deceiver of the people. However it may ſeem at firſt ſight, the moſt advantageous ſituation for taking a complete

view

view of Jeſus, will be found at his croſs: and the more attentively we conſider that kind of death, and the circumſtances which attended his death in particular, the more clearly will the tranſcendent beauty and excellence of his character ſhine forth to our obſervation.

Mean while the firſt and moſt obvious queſtion which naturally occurs, is, How he came there? and what were the crimes for which he was condemned to ſuch a barbarouſly cruel death? Upon the ſtricteſt inquiry it will be found, that he lived with ſuch perfect innocence, that he was not afraid to challenge his moſt inveterate enemies to convict him, of ever having ſaid or done any thing amiſs, during the whole courſe of his life: and that is more than can be ſaid of any other man, from the beginning of the world to this day. They charged him indeed with many things which they called ſins and blaſphemies, but which were indeed the brighteſt parts of his character. The ſum of their charge was, That he charitably healed the ſick and diſeaſed on their ſabbath-day; and ſaid, which was a great truth, that he was that Son of God who ſhould come into the world; and whom

thoſe

thoſe very men who charged him with blaſphemy on that account, pretended, at that very time, to be daily expecting and looking for: that is, they charged him with blaſphemy for ſaying thoſe very things which their Meſſiah, whenever he came, muſt have ſaid.

But however amiable a part perfect innocence makes of a character, it is hardly poſſible it can be maintained, without the exerciſe of benevolence and beneficence throughout the whole courſe of life. Or, in other words, perfect innocence cannot ſubſiſt without perfect love to God and man; nor that without the natural fruits, exerciſes, and actings of it on every proper occaſion. And there it was, that this Jeſus ſhewed himſelf to the greateſt advantage. He paſſed indeed the firſt, and greateſt part of his life, in a very low and retired ſtation; without any extraordinary ſhow, excepting only his converſation with the doctors and learned men in the temple when he was only twelve years of age, which filled every one that heard him with aſtoniſhment.

But from the time appointed for his manifeſtation, and entering on his proper

buſineſs, which only commenced at his baptiſm, his whole life was ſpent in going about doing good; healing all manner of diſeaſes, giving eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, limbs to the maimed, and, which is infinitely more, life to the dead, on ſeveral occaſions. Never did any apply to him, however deſperate the caſe was, who went away without their errand; and in many caſes, he freely diſpenſed his favours to ſuch as neither aſked, nor ſo much as thought of applying to him.

But however kind he was to the bodies of men, it was with their ſouls his main buſineſs lay. He proclaimed the goſpel of the kingdom, thoſe good news to a periſhing world, which angels begun at his birth, when they thus ſaid: "Glory to "God in the higheſt, and on earth peace, "good-will towards men." And this he did with ſuch power, that not only ſtorms and tempeſts, but the devils themſelves, were forced to give ready obedience unto his word of command.

The number of miracles performed by him was very great; and the loweſt concluſion that can be drawn from theſe aſtoniſhing inſtances

inſtances of divine power, is that of Nicodemus, viz. That he muſt be a teacher ſent from God. And accordingly, to theſe we find himſelf often appealing. This concluſion, ſimple and natural as it appears, is very comprehenſive. Whatever he ſpoke in that capacity, had all the authority of a divine oracle, and demanded ſubmiſſion, as the words of the living God.

This carries his character very high. He ſaid he was the Chriſt, the Son of the living God, the King of Iſrael, and the Saviour of the world; not ſuch a ſaviour as they who had gone before him, by whom God had wrought wonderful temporal deliverances; but the author of eternal ſalvation to all ſuch as obey him, and the judge of the world, by whoſe final ſentence the eternal ſtate of all mankind ſhall be determined.

He carries his pretenſions yet higher, even to ſuch an oneneſs with the only true God his Father, that whoſoever ſees him ſees the Father: nay more, that whatever the Father does, he does alſo, even to raiſing the dead, and quickening whom he will. And his diſciples, who knew his mind

perfectly, aſſure us, that he was ſo far from beginning to exiſt when he was born into this world, that he was not only before Abraham, as himſelf ſaid, but even before the world; and that all things were made, not only by him, but made for him; and, in one word, that he was that very perſon of whom Moſes and the prophets wrote; and accordingly he directed his hearers to ſearch the ſcriptures; For, ſaid he, thoſe are they which teſtify of me.

Great pains have been taken, and much wit, and what they call learning, has been employed, to bring down the meaning of many deſcriptive prophecies of the Meſſiah, and to apply them to perſons and things which have no relation to him. But after all their learned labours, enough remains to anſwer the purpoſe. They are indeed very various, and ſo conceived, that until they were fulfilled in the perſon of Jeſus, it was the hardeſt thing in the world to reconcile them to each other. Sometimes he is deſcribed as a child born, a ſervant in very low and abject circumſtances, and in the end brought to a diſgraceful and untimely end; at other times, again, in all the

pomp

pomp and majeſty of a triumphant conqueror, at the head of an univerſal monarchy, and of whoſe kingdom there ſhall be no end. The carnal Jews, who had no notion of any ſpiritual bondage, ſalvation, or kingdom, graſped greedily at this laſt part of his character, and overlooked the other; and yet, had he not been thus meek and lowly, deſpiſed and rejected of men, and in the end died as he did, he could not have been the perſon of whom Moſes and the prophets wrote.

This carries the character of Jeſus to a ſtupendous height. Creating power is the higheſt that can be conceived; and indeed the higheſt and moſt diſtinguiſhing character of true, proper, incommunicable Deity, that himſelf aſſumes and inſiſts on throughout the record; and the higheſt pitch of religious acknowledgement the moſt enlightened ſaint ever made; ſo high, that thoſe who would ſink him either to a mere creature, or to an inferior degree of Deity, have no reſourſe left, but that very precarious one, that the ſupreme God could make a creature who might be able to create worlds. But Jeſus himſelf

himſelf has ſaid, (and he never ſaid any thing but what was perfectly true), that whatever the Father doth, he doth alſo. And we find, further, the eſſential name JEHOVAH attributed to him; and it is attributed to him in more places of the Old Teſtament than commentators have obſerved. When therefore he is expreſsly ſtyled, *The Lord*, and *King of Iſrael*, what authority have we to make him a ſubſtitute in any other way than that to which he has condeſcended to humble himſelf? And is not this more abſurd and unintelligible than what they would avoid by it, viz. a trinity, diſtinguiſhed by the names of *Father*, *Son*, and *Spirit*, of the ſame divine ſubſtance or eſſence, ſubſiſting and acting in and by one another?

Thus we are taught, that the *eternal* Word, for whatever is before the beginning of time muſt be eternal, the ſame who is called the *Son*, was made fleſh; and by aſſuming the human nature into perſonal union with his divinity, made the neareſt approach the creator could make to the creature, and in effect united himſelf to it. So that we have, in ſtrict truth, the ſame aſſurance, that this divine perſon is the creator, as that the being called *God* is; and

and the ſame evidences of divine power and wiſdom, with all other perfections; and the ſame means too of aſcertaining our belief, and helping our conceptions, by the analogous powers he exerted in the mighty works which he did; many of which approach ſo near to creating power, that they at leaſt imply ſuch a command of all the powers of nature, as none but the creator could poſſibly exert.

And this leads to the aſtoniſhing event; how ſuch an excellent being came thus to condeſcend to bear the form of a ſervant, and thus to be deſpiſed and rejected of men? None will be ſo fooliſh as to imagine the Deity was changed into Humanity, or the Humanity into Deity: but it is eaſy to conceive, that the inviſible Deity might, if he ſo pleaſed, hide his glory under this mean appearance, as we are told Jehovah, unqueſtionably the true God, frequently did in the early ages of the world. But, at the ſame time, there muſt be ſome proportionable end to anſwer by it. And it is here that the diſtinguiſhing character of Jeſus Chriſt diſplays itſelf in the ſtrongeſt colours. And, to ſay it all in one word, it was *love* to mankind, and to give the moſt convincing evidence

evidence of the truth of what the Apoſtle John tells us, that *God is love*. To convince mankind of this, labouring as they are under the miſrepreſentations of an evil conſcience, and thereby to reconcile them to God as the proper object of love, is the whole deſign of the goſpel, the record God has made concerning his Son.

But this is not to be effected without what is properly called the *ſpiritual diſcerning* or *perception;* nor can that ſubſiſt without ſpiritual life, of which it is the leading power; nor yet can that life ſubſiſt but by reſtoring to man that ſpirit which Adam loſt by his falling from God; by which all communication with the fountain of life was ſtopped, and man became a mere animal: rational indeed, and that ſets him above the brutes; but reaſon cannot move without ſomething to work upon, and therefore can extend no further than his perceptive powers go, which reach no further than a preſent world. Whence the Apoſtle calls all thoſe who have not the ſpirit, *ſenſual*, as they have no other guide but their ſenſes, until they come to be better informed, as blind men are of light, and its properties and effects.

Many

Many have thought, that the creator might have raiſed mankind to this new life by a mere act of grace, without any more ado. And in effect he has done ſo. But by the primeval law, the life we have from Adam muſt be deſtroyed; and, that ſin might be fully condemned, men muſt believe and agree to the condemnatory ſentence, that the wages of ſin is death, and that fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. But, above all, man muſt have a ſtrong foundation laid for the belief of ſuch a very unlikely thing, as that a righteous and holy God, who, from the perfection of his very goodneſs, muſt perfectly hate and abhor ſin, and deſtroy it out of his world, that ſuch a God ſhould not only pardon and forgive the ſinner, but raiſe him up to a ſtate of ſuch dignity, perfection, and happineſs, as Adam's paradiſiacal life was but a very faint image and figure of; and, finally, that this happy life ſhould be ſecured againſt any new forfeiture, which it muſt have been continually expoſed to through the weakneſs and folly of man, had it been lodged in his hands without any better ſecurity.

As this is, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, and

without any metaphor, a new creation, by which men are introduced into a new world, and a new way of living, they are accordingly provided in a new head, ſuch as Adam his figure was in the firſt creation. To him the grant of life-eternal was made; and by uniting the man Jeſus with the eternal Word, all the fullneſs of life was actually lodged in his hand; and ſo lodged, that none can have any ſhare in it, or enter the ſpiritual and eternal world, but by deriving it from him, and partaking of his ſpirit, in what is properly called *regeneration*, or *the new birth*. To him the terms of life were given: and they were ſevere ones; that he ſhould be obedient even unto the death; that he ſhould take upon himſelf the burden which ſin had brought upon mankind, overcome every temptation, and, by making himſelf a ſacrifice for, and condemning ſin in the fleſh, ſhould open a way for deſtroying ſin and death; and thus effectually bruiſe the ſerpent's head, and deſtroy the works of the devil. Theſe terms he completely fulfilled; and thus made out a perfect right to the promiſed life. So that the grant comes free, as the freeſt gift to mankind; only with this natural and neceſſary conſequence, that

that they deny themſelves, take up their croſs, and follow him; that is, in other words, that they acquieſce in the original conſtitution, and give up to death and deſtruction the life they had from Adam, renounce all pretenſions to hold by the firſt creation-grant, reſt in the gift of grace in Chriſt, and hold all by his right; as himſelf has ſtated it, As the Father hath given to me, ſo do I give the kingdom to you.

Thus, then, the complex character of Jeſus Chriſt unfolds to us all the very different, and ſeemingly inconſiſtent, accounts that are given of him: God condeſcending to dwell with men upon earth in the man Jeſus; and the man exalted into the perfection, the glory and dignity of God, with all the fullneſs of life, and its moſt perfect powers dwelling in him; all wiſdom and underſtanding, almighty power, and the perfection of goodneſs, exerted in and by the wonderful man, choſen and anointed for theſe high purpoſes; the true prieſt interceſſor ſtanding between the creator and his creatures, and the great and only mean of communication between God and man.

From the whole of his hiſtory laid together, ariſes the moſt amiable of all characters; a perfect image of the inviſible God, without any defect or abatement. His perfect diſintereſted love was tried and approved by all the teſts which love can be put to; when, inſtead of the joy that was lying before him, and his natural right and due, he humbled himſelf into the very loweſt of what is called the miſery of mankind, abſolute poverty and contempt, the utmoſt contradiction of ſinners, and malice of the great and mighty; he endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame. And this is recommended by every circumſtance which can be imagined to endear the tendereſt and moſt affectionate love: and all the recompence he had to aſk of his heavenly Father for all the ſorrows and ſufferings he had undergone throughout his faithful ſervice was, to be glorified with that glory he had with him before the foundation of the world.

That glory he began to enter upon at his reſurrection from the dead; by which he appeared to be, what never another man was, the abſolute proprietor of his own life; who had power to lay it down,

down, and power to take it up again. Thus he aboliſhed and triumphed over death, deſtroyed the works of the devil, ſet life and immortality in the faireſt light, and laid, for all his followers, a ſtrong foundation of faith and hope of being made like him in his reſurrection and glory.

He continued on earth a conſiderable time after, but no longer than he judged it neceſſary to confirm his diſciples in the full aſſurance of his reſurrection: he then aſcended into heaven in their ſight, entered into his glory, and ſoon after gave full proof of it by ſuch an exertion of power and authority, as none but God could give; fulfilling the promiſe he had made them before his death, that he would ſend them another comforter, who ſhould lead them into all truth; and fulfilling it in a manner that one would think muſt have convinced the moſt obſtinately prejudiced unbeliever. And thus we have him preſented to our faith in a ſtate of dignity infinitely above what the moſt pompous deſcriptions of the prophets expreſſed, every way worthy to be truſted with the moſt aſſured confidence, for making good every part of his general character,

racter, as ſurety of the new and better covenant to convey the promiſed bleſſings, and to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come unto God by him.

But yet there is another part of his character which it concerns us much to keep continually in view; that as all power in heaven and in earth is given into his hand, and the whole weight of government laid upon his ſhoulders, ſo all judgement is committed to him; particularly that final one, at the day which God hath appointed, when we muſt all appear before his judgement-ſeat, and have our eternal ſtate of happineſs or miſery fixed by his unalterable ſentence. And ſure it concerns us much how we treat him now, when he comes, as he does in the word of the goſpel, with all the attractions of redeeming love, to ſave us from our ſins, and the ſnare of the devil, and the dreadful bondage in which we are all of us ſo deeply involved, that nothing but the mighty power of God in his hand can relieve us.

12. *The original ſtate of Mankind after the entrance of ſin.*

THE original ſtate of mankind, is a point of which thoſe whom we call *ancient writers* have nothing to ſay. The eldeſt of them are the Greeks, who knew nothing but the traditions they had of the barbarous condition of their anceſtors; from which they very fooliſhly concluded, that all the reſt of the world were ſuch. Moſes is incomparably more ancient than the eldeſt of them, and had advantages, ſuch as none of them had, or could have. I will ſay nothing now of the authenticity of his hiſtory, but take the account he has given as he has laid it.

When our guilty firſt parents concluded, that their hitherto munificent creator was now become their irreconcileable enemy, from whom they had nothing to expect but death and deſtruction, the only expedient that occurred to them was, to keep themſelves as much as poſſible out of his ſight; and had he left them to themſelves, they and their poſterity muſt have

have ſunk into a ſtate of greater and more wretched ſavageneſs than any of them have ever yet been found in. But he left them not long to languiſh in ſuch diſmal anxiety. The great ſovereign and judge of the earth ſought them out, called them into judgement, and, by his wiſe and righteous ſentence, fixed what was to be, and has been ever ſince, the permanent and unalterable ſtate of mankind. By which it appears, that the paradiſiacal ſtate, with all the perfection and happineſs which attended it, was never deſigned by perfect wiſdom, otherwiſe than as a proper introduction to another. It is here, therefore, that we are to look for that divine conſtitution or law given to mankind; the declaration of his eternal counſels and purpoſes, what meaſures he was to follow, what ſhould be their duty in all time coming, and what ſhould be the event and iſſue of all; by which only mankind can know what they have either to hope or to fear from the hand of their creator.

Man is evidently ſo made, as to be ſtrongly connected with, and dependent on, the material ſyſtem, for the ſupport and maintenance of this ſhadow of life which

which he poſſeſſes in a preſent world. I call this a ſhadow of life, becauſe it appears plainly, that he is capable of a way of living incomparably preferable to it; a life, by which he is as ſtrongly connected with, and dependent on, the ſpiritual and eternal ſyſtem. Hence, to take any thing like a juſt view of the ſtate of mankind, his ſituation with reſpect to both theſe ſyſtems muſt be attended to.

With reſpect to the material ſyſtem, and his condition in the preſent world, he was evidently a great loſer by his tranſgreſſion. The original law bound him under death; and accordingly ſentence is pronounced, that he ſhall return unto the duſt, from which he was taken; and thus all hopes of the continuance of all or any of thoſe pleaſures and gratifications we are ſo fond of, are utterly extinguiſhed. And it becomes the vaineſt thing that can be well imagined, to ſet our hearts upon any of them; and the moſt egregious folly, to value ourſelves on ſuch ſhort and precarious enjoyments or poſſeſſions, as a preſent periſhing and precarious life can admit of.

Nor was this all: The now unhappy man was deprived at once of all the pleaſures and

comforts of life which he had formerly enjoyed in paradiſe, and was driven out to till the *earth*, *from which* he was taken. And this, by the way, ſuggeſts to us a truth; I am afraid, too little minded: Man was not made *in* paradiſe; nor was that the natural ſtate of man, even in the height of his innocence and perfection, but a gift ſuperadded of free ſovereign grace: God planted and furniſhed the garden, and put him into it, without any merit or co-operation of his.

But neither was the earth, which he was ſent to till, left in its original condition. Many fine things have been ſaid of the ſuperlative fruitfulneſs of the antedeluvian ſoil; but how any came by the knowledge of it, is hard to ſay. This, we are ſure, they learned not from Moſes; for he gives it as the expreſs words of the ſenſentence, "Curſed is the ground for thy "ſake: thorns alſo and thiſtles ſhall it bring "forth:" the great occaſion of that toil and labour which Lamech complained of, becauſe of the ground which God had curſed, and which he promiſes himſelf relief from by his ſon Noah. Accordingly we find a promiſe made after the deluge

deluge to this ſame Noah, that he would no more curſe the ground for man's ſake. And thus every thing was made to help forward the execution of the ſentence, the labour and ſorrow which was to attend the human life, and to make him earn his bread by the ſweat of his brows; which has been the caſe of the generality ever ſince, however ſome have fallen upon methods to exempt themſelves from it; but whether to their real advantage, is at beſt very doubtful.

As the woman had the firſt hand in the tranſgreſſion, ſhe had her ſhare allotted to her of the puniſhment; the ſorrows of conception and child-bearing, which her daughters feel to this day. Beſides, there was a ſort of ſubjection on her part, and dominion over her given to the huſband, ſuch as the perfect love which ſubſiſted in their innocent ſtate could not admit of. But, after all, that the ſentence of death was not immediately put in execution, was a gracious indulgence they had no reaſon to expect.

But however great man's loſs was in his connections with the material ſyſtem, and a preſent world, we have no reaſon to ſay ſo with regard to the ſpiritual. So far from it, that by the conſtitution of

grace, (I cannot call it *new*, for it was eſtabliſhed from eternity in the unchangeable divine purpoſe, and only then firſt revealed to mankind); by this divine conſtitution, his connection with the ſpiritual world was incomparably cloſer, and eſtabliſhed on another ſort of firm foundation, than what he had in paradiſe; and his proſpects enlarged in proportion to another kind of happineſs; and the enjoyment thereof ſecured againſt all events to endleſs eternity.

The account which Moſes gives of this new revelation is very conciſe, but abundantly ſufficient for thoſe for whoſe uſe the record was made. The Iſraelites had it ſufficiently explained in the bleſſing of their father Abraham, and the law given in the wilderneſs, where they had nothing to do for forty years but to hear and learn the mind of God; and after ages, by the later prophets, and the writings of the diſciples and apoſtles of Jeſus: and yet, if the account Moſes hath left us, of what was ſpoken, and what was done, by the creator on that occaſion, is rightly underſtood, we will ſee it was the ſame revelation which was publiſhed to the world by Jeſus Chriſt and his apoſtles.

Of

Of what the creator ſaid on this occaſion, Moſes has recorded no more than is contained in the ſentence on the ſerpent, viz. That the woman ſhould have a ſeed that ſhould bruiſe his head. Though the curſe is pronounced in terms which apply literally to the inſtrument of ſeduction, yet no perſon who conſiders circumſtances can doubt, that the bruiſing the ſerpent's head ſtrongly expreſſes what the Apoſtle John makes the Son of God's errand into this world, *to deſtroy the works of the devil.* The works of the devil are ſin and death; and when theſe are deſtroyed, nothing remains but pure life; and thus deſtroying the works of the devil is of the ſame import with that ſaying of our Lord, that having life in himſelf, he came to give eternal life unto all that would come and receive it at his hand.

That Adam took it thus, ſeems pretty plain, from the name he gave his wife upon that occaſion. She was to be the mother of *all living* before ſhe got her name; but now that ſhe was to be the mother of that ſeed who had all life in himſelf, and from whom it was to be conveyed to thoſe who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, ſhe was conſtituted the mother of *all life*, as the original

original word imports; as it is by him, and him only, who raiſes the dead, that the man, who certainly muſt die, can live for ever.

But when we further conſider what God is ſaid to have done, we cannot help thinking, that all this was more fully explained to our firſt parents. His driving them out of paradiſe put an end to their firſt creation-life, and brought them into ſuch circumſtances, that live they could not, but by a new grant; and that, we are well aſſured, could not be given but under a new head, and that by free ſovereign grace, and a power equivalent to creating, raiſing them from the dead.

We are further told, he made them coats or garments of ſkins to cover their nakedneſs. They were naked in paradiſe, and were not aſhamed ſo long as they were innocent; but ſo ſoon as ſin entered, ſhame came along with it: A fair intimation that their nakedneſs lay in their ſouls. It is natural to put the queſtion, What ſkins were theſe? Suppoſing, what yet is denied by moſt, that they fed on fleſh, could ſo many be killed for Adam and Eve? But if we ſuppoſe, what indeed muſt be admitted,

ted, that God revealed to them his grant of eternal life, and the conduct required on their part; which is what our tranſlators call making a covenant; of which ſolemnity a ſacrifice was an abſolutely neceſſary part, as is clear from the caſe of Noah, Abraham, and the Iſraelites, not to mention the more private and particular ones; then covering their nakedneſs with the ſkins of the ſacrifice, was a fair emblem and repreſentation of that covering for ſin which God had provided for them, and all who would be prevailed with to renounce their fig-leaf coverings, and put on the Lord Jeſus. It was on this great foundation that the conſtitution of grace, and the grant of eternal life, were then eſtabliſhed, and ever ſince have ſtood. Nor is it conceivable how the butchering of beaſts, ſhedding their blood, and formally burning their fleſh in a fire prepared for the purpoſe, could ever have been ſet up as a piece of divine worſhip, on any lower authority than that of God; nor even on that, without explaining the deſign of it.

Moſes tells us further, that God placed at the eaſt of the garden, cherubims, to keep the way of the tree of life. The cherubims,

cherubims, we know, were, of all others, the moſt ſacred piece of furniture in the tabernacle and temple; and no body doubts of their being emblems of ſomething very ſacred. They were, without diſpute, deſigned a ſenſible repreſentation of that exhibition of the divine glory which Ezekiel ſaw in viſion, and which he knew to be the cherubims. In them, or between them, was the throne of God, the throne of grace, the ſymbolical repreſentation of his dwelling with men; and thence he gave his oracles and reſponſes to thoſe who conſulted him. And thus they were a ſenſible repreſentation of the whole frame of the conſtitution of grace. There was indeed no ſmall danger, that man, once ſeduced, might fall into the like error, and imagine ſome virtue in the material tree of life. Very properly, therefore, and in great mercy to him, he was expelled the garden, and directed to another object, the true tree of life in the paradiſe of God.

On this obvious view, no body could have doubted, that the cherubims ſet up on the eaſt of Eden were of the ſame kind with thoſe which the prophet Ezekiel ſaw, and deſigned to anſwer the ſame purpoſe with

with the model of them in the tabernacle and temple; which appears to have been ſo well known in Moſes's time, that the workmen made them without any direction, except that they were to beat them out of the ſame piece of gold whereof the propitiatory or mercy-ſeat was made. And all would have been plain and eaſy, had not tranſlators thought they met with a flaming ſword brandiſhed or turning every way, in the original of Moſes: and comparing it with what was given as the reaſon of turning Adam and his wife out of paradiſe, they imagined this was a guard of angels brandiſhing a ſort of flaming ſword to ſcare them from returning.

I will ſay nothing of this notion, but that the original gives no countenance to it. The Hebrew word is indeed often uſed by Moſes, and the other ſacred writers, for any killing or deſtroying weapon; and a ſword among others. But one needs only turn to any of the common dictionaries of that language, to be ſatisfied, that this is not the natural and original meaning of the word; but drying, ſcorching, conſuming, all which are the effects of fire and flame;

whence it is by an eaſy analogy transferred to denote every thing which has ſuch effects. And thus we ſhall have nothing left us but a flaming fire, the ordinary ſymbol of the divine glory, reſting on the cherubims; and ſo like Ezekiel's fire, involving itſelf, or blazing every way, that one can hardly help believing they were the ſame.

Upon the whole, it muſt be acknowledged, that the ſtate of mankind complexly taken, was ſo far from being made worſe, that it was greatly bettered by the fall of our firſt progenitors. For, beſides the unexceptionable ſecurity, and the unſpeakable ſuperexcellency of the new proſpects, there is one circumſtance which vaſtly enhances the pleaſure, and lays the foundation of the warmeſt gratitude and love, deep and ſtrong as can poſſibly be imagined; and that is the relation eſtabliſhed between man and God's own Son, the new head of mankind.

The grace of the firſt creation, and the peculiar favour ſhown to man above the other animals, called for ſuitable returns of gratitude. The favour was moſt ſovereignly free; for when all was nothing, there could be nothing to raiſe one creature

ture above another, but the abſolute will and pleaſure of the creator. Nor could man's love and gratitude be ever carried ſo high as the favour deſerved. But as he had never known, much leſs felt, himſelf in any other condition; he might eaſily have been tempted, as ſome have been, to look upon all as his creation-dues, and accordingly have valued himſelf upon them. But when, after the humbling intimation, "Duſt thou art, and unto duſt thou ſhalt "return," he found himſelf on the very brink of eternal deſtruction; while his own conſcience tormented him with the remembrance of what he had loſt; what a ſweet ſurpriſe muſt the proſpect of pardon have given him! and how could he ever be thankful enough! Eſpecially when he found ſuperadded to this, (and ſtrongly ſecured to him, in the new head provided in the promiſed ſeed), a grant of all the perfection, glory, and happineſs of eternal life. Surely nothing could equal the raptures of love and gratitude he muſt then have felt, but the Apoſtle's expreſſion, if even that can come up to it, "a joy unſpeakable, and full of glory." Where the heart is thus formed on the ſovereign, condeſcending grace, and love,

and kindneſs of God to man, no commandments of his can be grievous: nay, the harder they feel to fleſh and blood, the more pleaſure it gives to obey chearfully, without aſking queſtions. The royal law of love is written on the heart; and all the commandments of God are no more but the native exerciſes and actings of it. So that it is quite aſtoniſhing how it ſhould ever have entered any one's head, that the doctrine of free ſovereign grace ſhould have any malignant aſpect on the practice of holineſs, when indeed it is the only ſure ground on which gratitude and love can ſtand. And perfect love is perfect holineſs. Where love is wanting, all is darkneſs in the ſoul, except the terrors of incenſed majeſty, and almighty power, which an evil conſcience, in the leaſt awakened, will ſet in a moſt dreadful light: and no motive is left to obedience, but that very baſe and ſlaviſh one, the fear of puniſhment; which is utterly inconſiſtent with that *glorious liberty* of the ſons of God; which is the privilege of thoſe who are raiſed to the high dignity of being heirs of God, and co-heirs with Jeſus Chriſt, his only begotten Son.

Thus

Thus happy, thus raviſhingly happy, muſt the firſt pair of ſinners have been on the very unexpected revelation of the conſtitution of grace, and the comfortable proſpect opened up in the promiſed ſeed. And thus happy might all their poſterity have been in the ſame proſpect, had it not been for that woful thing they call *liberty*, which the world has been ſo madly fond on; and which yet is the great imperfection of human nature, and the inlet of all the evils which have infeſted human life, and of that dreadful apoſtaſy which involved the whole world in utter deſtruction. The foundation of it is laid in ignorance and folly; the want of that wiſdom which ſhould keep one firm and ſteady to his *true* intereſt; and in that tendency, ſo deeply rooted in our conſtitution, to purſue what to us *appears* to be our intereſt.

This is no arbitrary thing, nor is there any choice left to us here; we can no more believe or diſbelieve, love or hate, by barely willing it, than we can walk in the clouds, or ride on the wings of the wind. In ſpite of ourſelves, and all we can do to the contrary, we muſt believe what appears

pears to us to be true, and doubt of what does not. We muſt love what appears to us lovely, and pleaſes; and muſt hate, in ſome degree, or at leaſt be cold and indifferent to what diſpleaſes, or appears hateful. So long, then, as the wonderful grace of the creator, in the aſtoniſhing proſpect of pardon and eternal life in the promiſed ſeed, was known and believed, the heart continued firmly knit in the pleaſant bands of love and gratitude.

The evidence of this was clear and ſtrong to thoſe who received this unſpeakable conſolation from the creator's own mouth. But thoſe who had no more but the tradition, were not in the ſame advantageous ſituation. The tradition had indeed ſuch advantages as made it worthy to be received and believed; but might be overlooked and neglected then, as well as the written tradition is now. The world, with all its allurements and affrightments, hath free acceſs by the fleſh and external ſenſes: ſpiritual and eternal things, however infinitely more excellent, are unſeen, and thence readily imagined to be remote; ſo that there is nothing to balance the heart againſt preſent ſenſe and feeling, but faith,

faith, the belief of the tradition; which, in its very nature, gives evidence and ſubſiſtence to ſuch facts as are unſeen, and ſubſiſt only in hope; and as this is weak or ſtrong, ſuch in proportion will be the ſtrength and weakneſs of the impreſſion made by the things believed on the heart and affections; and ſuch muſt be the ſentiments and inward feelings of the believer.

One way by which the original tradition, or, which is the ſame thing, the divine law, eſtabliſhing the meaſures of grace, and the duties ariſing from them, is violated or broken in upon, is, when the ſenſible pleaſures of a preſent world impoſe ſo far on the unguarded mind, as to take poſſeſſion of the heart, as moſt worthy of our purſuit; by which the heart is ſo cooled toward God and his grace, as inſenſibly to loſe all regard to what we have either to hope or to fear from him. This is the conſequence of our natural ignorance.

This is a ſtate ſo much below a reaſonable creature, that it is not conceiveable how it can hold, unleſs we can ſuppoſe the original tradition altogether loſt, and

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men left abſolute atheiſts; a caſe, which, by all the information we have, never happened. Wofully corrupted it has been, and religion degenerated into the moſt ſilly ſuperſtition. But that, inſtead of deſtroying, greatly increaſeth the occaſions of remorſe; when the man, reflecting on his own conduct, diſcovers, by the light of tradition, that he has offended God; and finds reaſon to ſuſpect, that this great being is become his enemy, from whom he has nothing to expect but evil. Then God appears no more a proper object of love; but, on the contrary, of dread and terror; and by this the ſeeds of enmity are deeply rooted in the heart.

Numberleſs are the methods that have been tried by men to placate the divine anger, and, by recommending themſelves to his favour, to quiet a guilty conſcience: but there is only one that can anſwer the purpoſe effectually; namely, the revelation of the grace of God in Chriſt, and the firm belief of the promiſe of pardon and life through him, as perfect wiſdom has laid the plan, in the eternal conſtitution of grace. Where-ever, therefore, any plan is ſet up in oppoſition to this, as many have

have been ſet up by the fanciful wiſdom of men; in all theſe numberleſs caſes, there is a plain apoſtaſy from the original ſtate the creator deſigned for fallen men. The chief of them is that plan of moral government, whereby man is left to ſtand or fall on his own bottom; on which all the different methods of working for life, and ſerving God, as they call it, are grafted.

As all theſe, and indeed the whole plan of moral government founded in our notions of what we call *juſtice*, and ſo far laying a foundation of reſting on our own merits in ſome ſhape or other, muſt be in the ſame degree deviations from what God has declared to be the meaſure of his government, viz. his ſovereignly free grace and mercy in Chriſt; according to which, the only way a ſinner can live to God, is by the grace lodged in the Redeemer's hand; therefore every attempt to recommend one to the divine favour, or to live by any other means, is the moſt direct and affrontive rebellion againſt our creator and ſovereign; and, in reality, a madly inſolent attempt to enter upon the poſſeſſion of life, whether God will or not.

Whatever was the firſt apoſtaſy of the antedeluvian world, all fleſh had in fact cor-

rupted themſelves to ſuch a degree, that we find the creator declaring, that he *repented* of having made ſuch a creature. It is eaſy to ſee, that ſuch a being as God is, not only the poſſeſſor, but abſolute proprietor of perfect knowledge, underſtanding, and wiſdom, could never do any thing which he ſhould wiſh had not been done; an eſſential property of repentance among men. But when the creator was about to undo what he had done, by deſtroying mankind, and the earth which they had defiled and polluted, human language had no word to expreſs the ſentiment by, but *repenting*. But where that corruption which ſpread ſo wide, took its firſt riſe, is not ſo eaſy to be diſcovered. We may indeed ſay, with good aſſurance, that it could not happen until the love of God was extinguiſhed in the heart of man; nor could that be, ſo long as the knowledge of the true God continued there. But whether this knowledge was loſt by his being ſwallowed up in the cares and pleaſures of a preſent world, or by miſtaking ſomething which was but a creature, for the true God, and thus transferring the properties and powers of the creator to an idol of their own imaginations, we cannot

not poſitively ſay. This laſt ſeems to have ſome countenance, from what God ſaid of the imaginations of man's heart, that they were all of them "only evil continually." From what may be ſeen in the progreſs of the preſent race of men, it ſeems moſt likely, that they went hand-in-hand, and forwarded and ſupported one another.

Children, for a number of years after their entrance into the world, ſubſiſt in a ſtate of abſolute dependence on their parents, and thoſe under whoſe care they are put; but are quite inſenſible of it. They have no notion of property; but think themſelves injured if any thing they take a fancy to, however hurtful, is detained from them; yet are very fond of thoſe who are kind to them, and appear to love them. To ſtrangers, however deſerving, they have an averſion; and a ſmall matter increaſes it to hatred. And thus, ſo long as their wants are ſupplied, they look no further, nor mind any of the other numerous dependencies they are under.

In time, by obſervation and inſtruction, they come to diſcover their connection with a preſent world; and that there is ſomething they have to hope or fear both

from the men and things about them. What pleaſes them in both, they continue extremely fond of. Thoſe who help them forward, they love; and often with great warmth: thoſe who ſtand in their way, they have an averſion to, and are ready to hate as violently. Hence their great buſineſs is, to recommend themſelves, and engage the eſteem and friendſhip of all about them. And thus, I am afraid, the bulk of mankind ſpend their days, ſeeking honour one of another. Any higher powers they hardly think of, except when alarmed with what threatens danger, or unleſs they have been taught ſomething about inviſible powers; but even that ſeldom goes farther, than ſuperſtitious fears of they know not what, and wiſhing to be kept out of their hands.

The men of the firſt ages were better taught, and lived too long, to reſt in ſuch a childiſh ignorance, and way of living. The tradition of a creator and ſupreme governor, to whom they were ſubject, and to whom they owed all their pleaſures, was freſh, and, in a manner, recent, down to Noah and the deluge. But who, and what kind of being this creator might be,

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was not ſo eaſily perceived. Swallowed up, as men very naturally are, in the cares and pleaſures of a preſent world; in the enjoyment of theſe they as naturally place their happineſs; and the greater improvement is made by the fine arts, the ſources of pleaſure are proportionally increaſed, and the more are the hearts of thoſe who feel that pleaſure, knit to the objects which raiſe and ſupport it. This cannot fail to deaden the heart to all other enjoyments; to thoſe eſpecially of the ſpiritual kind, and that honour which cometh from God only. It was not until Lamech's ſons brought in their improvements of theſe ſorts of pleaſures, that mankind came to be corrupted to ſuch a height as brought upon them the deluge.

In this ſtate of mind, it followed of courſe, that they ſhould pay their adoration and homage to that being on whom all their pleaſures were ſuppoſed to depend; and who had, or was imagined to have, the beſtowing of them. No body who knows the creator will doubt, that it would have been eaſy for him to have ſupported man in being by the ſame immediate power which gave him exiſtence, without any means

or under-agents; but as man was incapable of perceiving ſuch power, this great evil might have followed, that he might be in a manner naturally led to imagine himhimſelf independent, and thus to caſt off all regard to any ſuperior whatſoever. Man was therefore very wiſely ſo connected with the material ſyſtem, the influence of the heavens, and the fruits of the earth, that he could not miſs to feel very ſenſibly his dependence upon them. But hereby again he was inſenſibly betrayed into the imagination, that theſe mechanical under-agents, the powers of the heavens, were the only ſuperiors on which he had any dependence. Theſe, he knew, not only regulated the times and the ſeaſons, but likewiſe produced all the materials which were the fund by which the pleaſures and enjoyments of life were maintained. Accordingly the heavens, or ſome one or other of their powers, were the ſole objects of the idolatry of the ancient nations; until, by the loſs of that branch of knowledge, they ſunk, in the latter times of Heatheniſm, into ſuch profound ignorance of the nature of the gods whom they ſerved, that they really worſhipped they knew not what. It continued, however, in ſuch credit down to the Babyloniſh captivity,

tivity, that the Jews themſelves, the beſt inſtructed nation on the earth, were then madly fond of it.

The great creator was not wanting, in every period, to give ſubſtantial evidence, that all theſe were no other than his inſtruments, by which he exerted his almighty power. How long the exhibition of the divine glory in the cherubims was continued, one cannot ſay: but as ſacrifices certainly were continued down to Noah, it is very likely there were ſome ſacred ſymbols of the divine preſence, before which that ſolemn piece of worſhip was performed. And it is not improbable, that what is called *the glory of God*, like the pillar of fire and cloud among the Iſraelites, might be abuſed ſo far as to be worſhipped in place of God. We read nothing of the creator's converſations with men after that with Cain; though it ſeems almoſt certain that they did continue, by the caſe of Noah, where God's converſation with him concerning the flood is mentioned in the record as a thing of courſe. Enoch's walking with God ſeems likewiſe to ſuppoſe it. But however that was, it is certain Enoch had the ſpirit of prophecy; and that he,

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as well as Noah, was employed to warn, and, if poſſible, to reclaim, a careleſs thoughtleſs world; and when God took him to himſelf, before he arrived near the middle of the then age of men, it was a ſenſible evidence, that there was another and better ſtate than the preſent one, with all the advantages that could be made of it.

But when nothing elſe would do, Jehovah effectually ſhowed that he himſelf was the creator and ſovereign of the univerſe; and that all thoſe things which the folly of mankind had ſet up againſt him, were no other than his miniſters, which he could employ for what purpoſes he pleaſed: as he then did employ them for the moſt awful purpoſe, even the utter deſtruction of thoſe very men who were ſo fooliſh as to worſhip them. The powers of the heavens, whoſe ordinary buſineſs it was to keep every thing in the place and order the creator had put them in, appear to have been either ſuſpended, or employed in ſuch a contrary way, that the waters returned upon the earth, much in the ſame manner as before their firſt ſeparation: ſo that we need be at no loſs to find water enough, not only to overflow, but to diſſolve, the earth into its original chaotic ſtate. And

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the reforming it again by the ſame means, exhibits a power perfectly ſimilar to the firſt creation, ſo that no room is left for doubting, but that he who brought on and removed the deluge, was moſt certainly the creator, and abſolute proprietor, of the univerſe.

This, it might have been thought, ſhould have ended the diſpute for ever. From this dreadful æra mankind took a new beginning, and, in ſome reſpect, a new condition. Noah became as much the common parent of mankind as Adam was. By the account we have of his way of making his acknowledgements to God, and God's way with him on that great occaſion, we are led more fully into proper views of what was the ſtate of mankind before, and what has been ſo ever ſince that time.

When Noah was directed to make the ark, he was commanded to take of every clean beaſt and fowl by ſevens, and only the male and female of the reſt; and at his coming out, we are told, that he took of every clean beaſt and fowl, and offered them as whole burnt-offerings, on the altar which he reared for that purpoſe. It

is obvious from this account, that the diſtinction between clean and unclean had not its firſt riſe in what is called *the ceremonial law* given by Moſes; nay, that it had been eſtabliſhed from the time that ſacrifices were ordained a piece of worſhip. Men, it appears, were not left at liberty to offer what they pleaſed, but what they were directed of God, any more than they might deviſe for themſelves the terms of pardon and acceptance with him. This perſuaſion continued ſtrong down through the darkeſt times of Heatheniſm; where every Deity was ſuppoſed to have choſen ſome particular kind of animal, and could not be rightly propitiated by offering any other.

We have the effect of this ſacrifice ſtrongly marked out to us. God ſmelled a *ſweet* ſavour, ſay our tranſlators; a ſavour of *reſt*, ſay others, rather more properly. What could there be in the ſmoke of burnt carcaſes of beaſts? And with the ſame propriety it may be aſked, What was there to give reſt or pleaſure to ſuch a being as God, ſo as to make him ſay to himſelf, that he would no more deſtroy the earth for the wickedneſs of man? Surely nothing

nothing in the beaſts, or in the ſmell of their burning: but there was enough in what they repreſented, the ſacrifice of his beloved Son, in whom he was always perfectly well pleaſed; and in whom, and his perfect obedience unto the death, all his counſels and purpoſes concerning man are founded.

But however firm and unchangeable the divine purpoſes are, they can have no effect on us until they are declared. And thus God *bleſſed* Noah and his ſons. The bleſſing of God is common in every one's mouth, but the knowledge of the true import of it is not ſo common. As it is certain it cannot ſtop in mere words, or good wiſhes, as mens do, it therefore can be no other than the exerting the divine power for them, ſo far as the bleſſing is intended to go. The bleſſing of Noah was having *God's covenant eſtabliſhed with him:* for thus the phraſe is commonly rendered. But when we come to conſider the terms in which it is expreſſed, there is nothing like what we underſtand by *a covenant*; nay, ſo far from it, that it is eſtabliſhed in the ſame terms with fowl, cattle, and every beaſt of the field; which, ſurely, entered

into no mutual agreement with him. And after all, it comes out to be nothing elſe, but declaring the purpoſe he had made in himſelf, that all fleſh ſhould no more be cut off by a flood.

But the bleſſing on Noah and his ſons extends further. The order given the firſt pair to increaſe and multiply is repeated; and ſomething very like the dominion they had over the creatures is given to him and his ſons, as theſe are ſaid to be delivered into his hand; and now, for the firſt time, they are given unto them for food, as the green herb and the fruits of the earth had been formerly. And in all this, God ſhows himſelf the proprietor of all; that man has no right to any thing, nor can have any, but by his ſovereign free gift.

But all this relates purely to a preſent life, and their comfortable ſubſiſtence in the fleſh: and it would be very ſtrange if this formal bleſſing extended no farther; as farther it cannot, if what follows has no further import than tranſlators have commonly given; that is, only a reſtraint laid on them from eating blood, and a prohibition of murder, with an order to avenge it; which perhaps has induced ſome learned men to pitch upon this as the ſole

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reaſon of the prohibition of blood, leſt it ſhould inure them to cruelty, and ſhedding the blood of one another.

But on a ſerious conſideration of the terms in which blood is forbidden here, and comparing it with the reaſon given for the prohibition in the Jewiſh law, the whole will appear to have a much higher intention, and to carry a repetition of the original promiſe of the ſeed of the woman bruiſing the ſerpent's head, more fully expreſſed. The reaſon given in the Jewiſh law why they ſhould not eat blood is a good one, that God had ſet it apart for the altar, to make atonement for their lives or ſouls. And thus it was very proper to ſay, that he would require the life of man at the hand of every beaſt: and in what other ſenſe it can be ſaid with any propriety at all, is certainly very hard to conceive.

And this gives the key to what follows, as ſomething infinitely higher than a prohibition of murder, and a threatening againſt the murderer. However the inſtitution of ſacrificing beaſts, and the promiſe of pardon annexed, was a ſufficient intimation for the ſinner to reſt his hopes, and even his aſſurance, upon; yet was it certainly

ly true, that the blood of bulls and of goats could by no means take away ſin, and therefore left the faith and hope of the worſhipper to reſt ſolely on the promiſe. But when God ſent his only and beloved Son to be the ſaviour of the world, and to make himſelf a ſacrifice for ſin; that is, his life a ranſom for theirs; and thus, through death, deſtroying the devil, the firſt and arch murderer, who brought death upon all mankind by ſin, or, in the Hebrew dialect, ſhed the blood of their lives; then the caſe was altered, and faith and hope in the fulleſt aſſurance had a firm and ſtrong foundation to ſtand on: "For (as the Apoſtle reaſons) he who ſpa-"red not his own Son, but delivered him "up for us all, how ſhall he not with him "alſo freely give us all things?"

Thus, it is evident, God requires the blood of every man at the hand of *the man*, i. e. the great or mighty perſon, his, or every man's brother. And it follows moſt properly, that *he*, (for *whoſo* is not in the text), that he who had ſhed, and whoſe trade it was to ſhed, the blood of man, or to bring him under the power of death, ſhould have his own blood ſhed, or be deſtroyed by man. And the reaſon given is ſtrong

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in this light: For, as *God made man in his own image*, the attempting his deſtruction muſt be the moſt enormous crime a creature could commit, and deſerved the moſt exemplary puniſhment; viz. that *he*, the murderer of man, ſhould be deſtroyed by *the man* who was his *perfect image*, or that ſeed of the woman who ſhould bruiſe the old ſerpent's head. Thus the bleſſing of Noah and his ſons was perfected, by thus ſecuring for them the perfecting bleſſing. And, in conſequence of the favour of reſt which aroſe on this great ſacrifice, the intimation of the divine purpoſe about the earth, and all the inhabitants of it, man and beaſt, was given, that he would no more curſe the ground for man's ſake, nor deſtroy the earth, as he had done, with a deluge.

But after all this, we have a ſtrange account of this great man who was ſo peculiarly favoured, and had the character of a juſt man, and perfect in his generation; that though he had lived ſix hundred years before the flood, and none can tell how long after, for the thing very probably happened near the end of his life; yet then only he began to be a huſbandman, planted a vineyard, and knew ſo little of the

the nature of wine, that he drank to exceſs; nay, was drunk to ſuch a pitch, that he had not ſo much command of himſelf as to cover his nakedneſs; and that, upon awaking, he immmediately falls a-bleſſing ſome of his children, and curſing others for their undutiful behaviour; and both by the ſpirit of prophecy. Thus I believe all the tranſlations repreſent it. But the original phraſe, Gen. ix. 20. "Noah began to be an huſband-"man," need not be ſo underſtood as if that had been the firſt time he practiſed huſbandry, but only that it was the buſineſs he followed after the flood; and the word rendered *drunk*, does not always ſignify the ſtupifying effect of wine, but whatever puts men into ſuch a ſtate as wine doth, locking up the ſenſes to external objects. And thus the hiſtory ſeems to carry in it ſomething very ſacred, which made Ham's conduct not only undutiful to his father, but highly profane in itſelf. Every body knows, that it was the cuſtom of the patriarchs to bleſs their children before their death; and when there were more than one, to convey the primitive bleſſing of the promiſed ſeed to that one of whom he was to deſcend.

This, ſurely, muſt have been a matter of too great moment to be left to the diſpoſal

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of any man whatſoever; and leaſt of all, to the caprice of a man juſt awaked from a fit of drunkenneſs. It is evident that it could not be done without particular divine direction. Thus we find Abraham inſtructed, that in Iſaac his ſeed ſhould be called as the child of the promiſe. And by what we find Iſaac did when about to convey the bleſſing to his ſon, Gen. xxvii. 25. drinking wine in ſome particular manner ſeems to have been a part of that ſolemnity. When the Apoſtle Paul was wrapt up to the third heavens, and had his very extraordinary revelations, he could not ſay whether he was in or out of the body. If he was in a divine ecſtaſy, which is moſt probable, he could have had no more care of his body than Noah had of his. And when the whole of Noah's character, and the ſpecial divine favour and grace ſhown him by God, are conſidered, together with his prophetic bleſſing and curſing his children, how much more reaſonable is it to think, that he was in ſuch an ecſtaſy, than oppreſſed with the fumes of the wine he had drunk: A very improper preparation, one ſhould think, for the ſpirit of prophecy. In conſequence of the indignity offered him by Ham, he might reaſonably enough

begin as he does, by curſing, or rather by declaring the curſe to be reſting where the event afterwards made it appear. But even this he doth not like one under the influence of reſentment: he paſſes by Ham, the offender, and all the elder children of Ham, and lodges the curſe on Canaan; where, we know, it has been punctually fulfilled. The bleſſing is as extraordinary as the curſe. Though, by all that appears in the hiſtory, Japhet, the eldeſt of Noah's ſons, was every way as dutiful as Shem the youngeſt, yet upon this laſt is the bleſſing made to reſt; whether we take the words as our tranſlators have rendered them, "Bleſſed "be the Lord God of Shem;" or rather, as there is neither verb nor tenſe in the original, "Bleſſed is Shem of the Lord his "God," which agrees better with what follows; for it was not to God, but to Shem, and his brother Japhet, who was joined with him in the bleſſing, that Canaan was doomed to be a ſervant. But the bleſſing of God is not conveyed as eſtates are among us, either by ſeniority or merit. It is free and ſovereign, and freely given where the great proprietor pleaſes. What ſome learned men have talked of the prerogatives of the eldeſt line, is ſo far

far from having any foundation in the ſacred hiſtory, that ſeniority there appears, in almoſt every inſtance, to be ſet aſide, and entirely diſregarded.

13. *Abraham.*

IT might have been expected, that the dreadful deſtruction of the old world, the diſtinguiſhing favour ſhown to Noah, and the bleſſing renewed, and entailed on him and his deſcendents, ſhould have ſecured the attachment of the new world to that God who had thus manifeſted at once his eternal power and Godhead, and the ſovereignty of his mercy and grace. But it ſoon appeared, that the creator and ſovereign of the world was not miſtaken when he ſaid, " That the imaginations of " man's heart were only evil continually." How ſoon the apoſtaſy began, or how long Noah's deſcendents continued in their adherence to the true God and his worſhip, cannot be eaſily determined. It is very probable, that Noah's curſe would ſit heavy upon Ham and his children, and that they would not longer continue to be devout adorers of that God who had, as they might

think, ſhown ſuch partiality againſt the younger brother, and doomed him to ſervitude. Among them, however, the defection ſeems to have begun; very probably under Nimrod; who was ſo diſtinguiſhed in his day, that his name went into a proverb, and gave riſe to the fabulous hiſtory of the old Aſſyrian monarchy; which yet did not take its riſe until within a few centuries of the date which they make the end of it.

As the worſhip of the heavens was undoubtedly the firſt and moſt natural idolatry, the builders of the tower of Babel ſeem to have had more in view than barely to prevent their being ſcattered abroad on the face of the earth; though even that was bad enough, and little, if any thing, ſhort of a direct rebellion againſt their creator, who had ordered them to be fruitful, and multiply, and repleniſh the earth. It can never be ſuppoſed they were ſo fooliſh as to imagine they could build a tower on a plain, which ſhould overtop all the mountains that ſurrounded it, much leſs ſhould reach to the heavens, as our tranſlators have made them ſay. They propoſed, indeed, that the top or ſummit of it ſhould be to

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the heavens; which cannot be conceived to have any other meaning than that it ſhould ſerve as a temple or altar to the *heavens*.

This one complex object, by which all the operations of what they call *nature* are maintained and carried on, came in time to be divided into a multitude of imaginary gods, as the different powers, effects, and operations, of that wonderful machine, happened to be pitched upon by different worſhippers. And by what we find Joſhua ſaying to the Iſraelites, of the gods which their fathers ſerved beyond the flood, it would ſeem that the apoſtaſy had become very general, if not univerſal, when it pleaſed God to take a further courſe for maintaining and ſupporting right religion in the world, by ſeparating Abraham and his family to be witneſſes for him againſt the prevailing idolatry and falſe worſhip.

Whether or not Abraham himſelf was involved in that idolatry which we are plainly enough told prevailed in his father Terah's family, we have no evidence on either ſide. The Jewiſh pretended traditions about him are ill-contrived fables. However, there is not the leaſt ground to imagine

gine that he merited the extraordinary favour which was ſhown him, when he was called to leave his father's houſe, and to go to a land, which, as yet, he was an utter ſtranger to; which command he nevertheleſs readily obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went.

At what time the command was given to Abraham to depart from his father's houſe, whether before his father and his family left Ur, or after he ſettled in Haran, we are not told; though the firſt is moſt likely. For though the leaving Ur be mentioned as Terah's deed; yet, as we are told, that it was with an intention of going into the land of Canaan, it would ſeem to have been in conſequence of the order given his ſon Abraham. In either caſe it might be very juſtly ſaid, as we find it is oftener than once, that God brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees. It ſeems alſo to have happened toward the end of Terah's life; for Haran the ſon of Terah had not only been married, but left children, who appear likewiſe to have been married: and though nothing is ſaid of Nahor coming along with them, yet, by what we find afterward of his family being ſettled at Haran,

ran, where Terah died, it would ſeem that he did.

But however that might be, which is of little moment to us on either ſide, the command given to Abraham muſt have been attended with undoubted evidence that it came from God. We are not told, as on ſome other occaſions, whether there was any ſenſible appearance of God to him, or in what manner the command was given. It is indeed hard, or rather impoſſible, for us, in our preſent ſituation, to conceive how thoſe divine appearances, viſions, and dreams, in which God appeared, and ſpake to Abraham, and the other patriarchs, could be certainly diſtinguiſhed, ſo as there might be no poſſibility of an impoſition: but one muſt have very poor notions of God, who can imagine it impoſſible for him to do what we are unable to conceive how it can be done. The prophet gives us a hint from God himſelf, which may ſatisfy any ſober inquirer: "He that "hath my word, let him ſpeak my word "boldly: what is the chaff to the wheat? Is "not my word like a fire, and a hammer that "breaks the rocks aſunder?" As much as to ſay, The word of God diſtinguiſhes itſelf

ſelf by that ſingular authority, majeſty, and power, attending it, which it is impoſſible for any to conceive unleſs they feel it. But they who do, feel in their heart a conviction of a kind very different from, and as much ſuperior to, what the moſt perfect demonſtration can produce, as the word of the great creator and ſovereign of the univerſe doth, in regard of evidence and efficacy, ſurpaſs the reaſonings and deductions of man.

Along with this command, there was given what is commonly called *God's covenant* with Abraham. But neither in this, nor in any of the repetitions of it, is there the leaſt appearance of what men commonly mean by a covenant; which cannot ſubſiſt but by a mutual agreement, on certain terms and conditions to be performed by each party. We ſhall make no remarks here upon the proper meaning of the original word: it is ſufficient to obſerve, that in the whole of that divine tranſaction with Abraham, which we render *God's covenant*, there is nothing found but free gratuitous declarations of what God had purpoſed to do, and to give; which were all of ſuch a nature as Abraham had not the leaſt ſhadow of any right

right or title to expect, viz. That he would make a great nation of him; that he would bleſs him, and make his name great; that he would bleſs thoſe who bleſſed him, and curſe thoſe who curſed him; that he would make him a bleſſing; and that all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed in him.

Theſe words need no comment to thoſe who know what the divine *bleſſing* imports. This lies at the foundation of all, and extends to every thing that God has determined to do for completing the perfection and happineſs of any of his creatures; comprehending at once the glory and felicity of the world to come, and all that is neceſſary to prepare and fit them for the perfect enjoyment of it. Thus we find the import of *bleſſing* explained by God himſelf, when he ſaid to Abraham, "I am thy ſhield, "and exceeding great reward:" and yet "further, when he promiſed, that he would "be *a God* to him, and his ſeed after him."

But however great and comprehenſive this promiſe was, and indeed the divine bleſſing is the utmoſt any creature can poſſibly receive, or, we may ſay, the creator can give; yet it was not peculiar to Abraham, but extends to all that ever ſhall

believe in God as he did. What diſtinguiſhed the covenant, or grant made to him, from that which is common to other believers, was, that it contained particular promiſes, which may be called *temporal*, for this reaſon, that though they ultimately referred to the ſpiritual and eternal world, yet were they all to be literally accompliſhed in this. Theſe temporal promiſes may be reduced to the three following heads, viz. Perſonal bleſſings on Abraham himſelf. A numerous poſterity deſcending from him. And eſpecially, a peculiar ſeed, in whom all the families of the earth were to be bleſſed.

We need not enlarge on what we call temporal, perſonal bleſſings; of theſe his hiſtory gives an ample detail. He was very rich in cattle, in ſilver, and in gold: he got a great name by his victory over the four kings, and was accordingly entertained and reſpected by the moſt eminent perſons of that age; and his name celebrated not only in the ſacred, but in the moſt ancient and authentic Heathen hiſtorians.

The very numerous tribes of Iſhmaelites and Edomites, to ſay nothing of his ſons by Keturah, together with the poſterity of Jacob, the choſen line, abundant

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verify the fulfillment of the promiſe of a numerous offspring. But what chiefly deſerves our notice, is, the promiſe of a peculiar *ſeed*, in whom all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed. It is unneceſſary to prove here, what the event has made ſo plain, viz. that this ſeed was that divine perſon who appeared in the world under the name of JESUS CHRIST. It is ſufficient to obſerve, that the original promiſe of the ſeed of the woman, which had formerly lain in common among the children of Shem, then came to be limited to Abraham, and his deſcendents; the higheſt privilege and dignity that could be conferred on any of mankind: and that, in after times, we find the ſame promiſe further limited, firſt to the family of Jacob, and, laſt of all, to that of David, where it ſtood until the fulfillment of it.

As this great promiſe was the foundation of all that faith and hope in God which was ever found among the children of Adam, and as the faith of this had nothing but the word and promiſe of God to reſt upon, it was neceſſary that the faithfulneſs and ability of the promiſer ſhould be well inſtructed; eſpecially when

ſuch a long tract of time, near two thouſand years, was to intervene before the fulfillment of it. Accordingly there were ſeveral intermediate promiſes given, all tending to this one great iſſue. As thoſe made to Abraham were the moſt remarkable, and on which the greateſt ſtreſs was laid in after times, to them we ſhall at preſent confine ourſelves.

The temporal bleſſings heaped on him in ſuch a remarkable manner, naturally tended to confirm his faith and confidence in that God, who had promiſed at the ſame time to give him a numerous iſſue. The only thing that looks like a condition was, God's command to go into Canaan. On his obedience to this, indeed, all depended; becauſe all the promiſes were to be fulfilled there, and there only. But it is very evident, that theſe promiſes were given him, not as a reward of his obedience, but to excite and encourage him to obey the command; and his obedience was the effect, and at the ſame time the evidence, of a very ſtrong faith, which (as the Apoſtle puts the caſe) could make the bare promiſe of God overbalance ſo many difficulties and diſcouragements.

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No ſooner was he entered into Canaan, than he received an additional promiſe, that God would *give* that land to his ſeed. It is the ſtyle of a ſovereign proprietor, who has a right to do what he will with his own: and the donation is abſolutely free, without any the leaſt reſtriction or limitation whatſoever. The ſame promiſe was renewed to him ſome years after, when he returned from Egypt, and Lot and his family were ſeparated from him; with a further promiſe, of giving him a very numerous ſeed.

But, many years after, we find him complaining, that, notwithſtanding all theſe promiſes, and the additional aſſurance that God was his ſhield or protector, and exceeding great reward, yet he had no ſon of his own body, and that one born in his houſe was likely to be his heir. On this he receives a further aſſurance, that he ſhould have for his heir one who ſhould come forth of his own bowels; and that of him there ſhould deſcend ſuch a numerous iſſue, as ſhould be like the ſtars of heaven for multitude. And upon this follows what has been conſtructed a *formal covenant:* when, at the divine command, he took

took a heifer of three years old, a ſhe goat, and a ram, each likewiſe of three years old; and, beſides theſe, a turtle dove and a young pigeon: and having divided them, and laid one half oppoſite to the other, a ſmoking furnace, and a burning lamp, paſſed between the pieces: A rite which we find practiſed in after times at making covenants or ſolemn agreements among men.

But when we conſider the hiſtory as it lies before us, this ſolemnity appears deſigned purely as a ſign to Abraham, for confirming his faith in the promiſe which God had made him, of giving that land for an inheritance: for we find Abraham ſaying, "Lord God, whereby ſhall I know "that I ſhall inherit it?" and it was in anſwer to this that the ſign was given him. And in regard it was yet a long time, more than four hundred years, ere the promiſe ſhould be fulfilled, therefore God condeſcends to inform him of the fate of his poſterity during that long interval: all which was ſo punctually fulfilled, that we find the hiſtorian obſerving, that on that very day which God had ſet, the armies of Iſrael, the ſeed of Abraham, who had been ſo long ſtrangers, and

and oppreſſed in Egypt, marched out of it to enter upon the promiſed poſſeſſion.

But all this while Sarah his wife was barren; and ſhe, in her impatience and deſpair of having any child, gave Hagar her handmaid for a concubine to him. By her he had Iſhmael: and there his faith ſeems to have reſted, until God gave him farther aſſurances, that it was not in the ſon of Hagar, but in a ſon whom Sarah his wife ſhould bear to him, that the promiſes ſhould be fulfilled. This, as matters ſtood, was ſo improbable an event, Sarah, always barren, being now advanced far beyond the age of child-bearing, that nothing but the direct interpoſal of the divine power could render the thing even poſſible. But this was enough to Abraham: he believed "that he "was faithful who had promiſed, and that "what he had promiſed he was fully able to "perform." Nor was he diſappointed in his hope: neither he, nor any who ever truſted God, were made aſhamed. Sarah brought forth a ſon, to whom all the promiſes made to Abraham and his poſterity were confined; and particularly that grand one, "that in his ſeed all the families of the "earth ſhould be bleſſed."

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Had Iſaac been born when Sarah was in her full ſtrength and vigour, the promiſe would have been as *really* fulfilled; but as that might have paſſed for a common thing, the hand of God would not have been ſo plainly *ſeen*, as it was when nothing but immediate divine interpoſal could have brought about the promiſed event. In like manner, Abraham's ſeed, Jacob and his ſons in particular, might have continued in Canaan, and grown up into a great nation there, even as Eſau's poſterity did in Mount Seir, and Lot's in the countries which they poſſeſſed. In that caſe likewiſe the promiſe of giving them the land of Canaan would have been fulfilled. But it would not then have appeared ſo plainly that God had *given* it to them, as it did, when, after a long and hard bondage in Egypt, he brought them out by immediate and direct interpoſals of divine power, and put them in poſſeſſion of the promiſed land, at a time too when the inhabitants were grown up into a more numerous and incomparably greater and mightier nation than they. Thus, all who would give attention, had ſenſible pledges of his faithfulneſs and almighty power for making good the great promiſe of that

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ſeed in whom all the families of the earth were to be bleſſed; and thereby ſupporting their faith and hope in God as their God, and thoſe eternal bleſſings ſecured to them in that ſeed.

14. *Imputation of Sin and Righteouſneſs.*

GReat things we find ſaid of Abraham's *faith*, by the Apoſtle Paul eſpecially; how "being ſtrong in faith, he ſtaggered "not at the promiſe of God through un-"belief," when all rational probabilities were againſt him: "He conſidered not his "own body already dead, neither the dead-"neſs of Sarah's womb:" but even "a-"gainſt hope, he believed in hope, that he "ſhould be the father of many nations." But there is one circumſtance taken notice of by the Apoſtle which has occaſioned no ſmall controverſy in the Chriſtian church: "He believed God, and it was *imputed* to "him for *righteouſneſs*." Some have taken ſuch an averſion to the word, that they cannot bear the mention of it; while others ſhow ſuch an extraordinary fondneſs for the term, that no other form of words

can pleaſe them where this is left out. There muſt certainly be ſome miſtake at bottom; eſpecially as moſt on both ſides appear perfectly agreed in the thing meant by it; and the diſputes, it would ſeem, might be fairly compromiſed, could the parties be brought to agree in the true and preciſe meaning of the word.

As the word is ſo frequently uſed, not only by the Apoſtle, but likewiſe in the Old-Teſtament writings, to which he refers, there can be no good reaſon given why it ſhould not be uſed by Chriſtian divines writing or ſpeaking on the ſame ſubject. For if the authority of the ſacred writers is admitted, we muſt acknowledge, that the imputing ſin, and the imputing righteouſneſs, are both proper expreſſions. And as there is not any difference about the firſt, the agreed meaning of imputation, when applied to ſin, will, if I am not much miſtaken, go a great way to fixing the ſenſe of the expreſſion, when applied to righteouſneſs.

Imputing of ſin, then, will readily be allowed to infer no more than inflicting the puniſhment which ſin deſerves; o- whatever ground that judgement may b ſuppoſed to ſtand, or whether the perſc

be really guilty or not. Thus we find Shimei at once confeſſing his ſin to David, and praying him not to *impute* it to him. And thus we find David deſcribing the bleſſedneſs of the man whoſe ſin is pardoned, that God *imputeth* not his ſin to him; while Saul moſt unjuſtly *imputed* ſin to Ahimelech and the prieſts at Nob, who were guilty of no crime. They appear therefore to be two very different queſtions, Whether or not the perſon be a ſinner, or guilty of the crime? and, Whether or not his ſin ſhall be imputed to him? or, which is the ſame thing, Whether his ſin ſhall be pardoned, or not?

If the imputation of righteouſneſs be conſidered in this light, the queſtion will not be, Whether the perſon to whom it is imputed be really a ſinner? for that is out of diſpute; nor can the judge of all the earth reckon or judge him to be a righteous perſon: but the queſtion is, Whether he ſhall be treated as a ſinner, or have the reward aſſigned him by the mere grace of the ſovereign? And ſo far, I believe, all ſides will agree. But there is ſomething of an ambiguity in the word *righteouſneſs*, which, I believe, runs through all languages; as it denotes either doing what is right, or

having (however the perſon comes by it) a right to the privileges of one who does ſo. And theſe, it is evident, are very different; for a pardoned criminal has, in all reſpects, as good a right to the privileges of a free ſubject, as another who never offended.

But the Apoſtle John has warned us not to deceive ourſelves; for he only "is righ-" teous who doth righteouſneſs," or what is *right*. And in fact theſe two always go together. But as righteouſneſs, or doing what is right, refers to ſome rule or ſtandard, the adjuſting of this hath run the parties into very warm diſputes. All are agreed, that the divine law is the undoubted rule of righteouſneſs; but of that law as many different forms have been invented, as men had different views and purpoſes to ſerve.

As the law of God is, and certainly muſt be, abſolutely perfect, it cannot poſſibly be anſwered but by abſolute perfection. Thoſe who make this the rule of righteouſneſs are greatly embarraſſed. For as "all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the "glory of God," excepting only the Son of God, who was ſent to be the ſaviour of the world; him therefore they have been force

to transform from the ſurety of God's covenant, into a ſurety for elect ſinners, to give for them, and in their ſtead, that perfect obedience which the law requires. And this they ſay is that righteouſneſs by the imputation of which ſinners are juſtified, and have the reward of eternal life aſſigned them.

But the man who forms his ſentiments on the record which God has been graciouſly pleaſed to leave in our hands, will find himſelf greatly ſtraitened to reconcile this plan to what we are there taught. I mention only two points, though many more might be inſiſted on. The firſt of them is, that the law requires not only perfect, but *perſonal* obedience; and cannot admit of the obedience of a ſurety, however perfect, without altering, or, which is the ſame thing, diſpenſing with the rigour of the law framed by the perfect wiſdom of the unchangeable God. The other is, that it makes the ſinner to be juſtified by the *law* in a ſtrict and proper ſenſe, and leaves nothing to the *gift of grace*, ſo much extolled in the goſpel, but admitting and providing a ſurety; which it will be found very hard, if not impoſſible, to reconcile with the doctrine

doctrine and reaſoning of our Lord and his apoſtles on this important ſubject.

A very obvious diſtinction of the divine law, founded in the very different circumſtances of perfect innocent creatures, and of ſinners, ſuch as all Adam's children certainly are, might, if duly adverted to, ſet the whole in a conſiſtent light. What is right for a ſinner to do, muſt be very different from what an innocent creature either ſhould or could do. The law of perfection was made for our firſt parents in their perfect ſtate. They had no promiſe but what was implied in the threatening, or penal ſanction; they were in poſſeſſion of all the life they had to expect, and that they held by the terms of law, "The man that "doth them ſhall live in them." But when the man ſinned, and ſentence was given againſt him in terms of law, binding him under death; all the purpoſe the lawgiver deſigned by it, appears by the event to have been anſwered; namely, to put mankind into ſuch a ſtate, that they could have no hope but in the free ſovereign mercy and grace of the creator and ſovereign proprietor of the univerſe. And from that day in which ſin entered into the

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world, there never was any law given which could give life; nay, it became no leſs than direct rebellion, and rejecting the authority of the ſovereign judge, ſo much as to attempt to live in that way.

What then is *right* for the ſinner to do? Surely, in the firſt place, it muſt be right to acquieſce in the ſentence. And that cannot be done any other way, than by giving up the forfeited life, to be deſtroyed, whenever God thinks fit, to execute the ſentence, and abſolutely renouncing all hope of recovering it by any thing he himſelf can do; the ſame which our Lord expreſſes by "denying ourſelves, and taking up our "croſs." And ſunk we muſt have been into abſolute irrecoverable deſpair, had there not been publiſhed, along with the ſentence of death, an intimation of a new grant of an incomparably better life, and of another and better way of living, in the promiſe of the ſeed of the woman, and the eſtabliſhment of what may be moſt properly called *the conſtitution of grace*; which is the rule and meaſure, at once of the ſinner's duty, and of the divine proceeding with him. The original duties of the creature, ſummed up, by perfect wiſdom, in the love of God

God and of one another, can never admit of any alteration. The law of creation binds them on every creature. But how to reconcile the heart of a ſinner to God and to man, is a taſk which could never have been accompliſhed, had not God manifeſted and recommended his love, as he has done, by the grant he has made, not only of pardon, but of eternal life, and the ſecurity and pledge he has given for the performance in his bleſſed Son, whom he ſent to be the ſaviour of the world, with all the fullneſs of life in his hand.

In this ſtate of things, it is certainly *right* for the ſelf-condemned ſinner to believe the teſtimony God hath given concerning his Son; and that cannot be believed, without believing, at the ſame time, that he has given him, and eternal life in him, to every ſinner who will accept him, and receive the gift of life from him, to be held under him, and, as we may ſay, in his right; that is, by the free gift, founded on his perfect obedience unto death: and as this cannot be done, without knowing and believing the love of God, ſo fully manifeſted and demonſtrated in him, the native conſequence

of this is, juſt what the Apoſtle ſays, that we love him becauſe he firſt loved us.

And thus the law and commandments of God ſtand ever ſince Adam was driven out of paradiſe. In the firſt place, that we believe the record and teſtimony God has given concerning his Son, the ſame with believing in Jeſus Chriſt; and on this foundation, love God and our neighbour, under the influence of the ſpirit and life of Chriſt, which he, we are well aſſured, certainly gives to all who receive and acknowledge him as God has atteſted his character. And as this is that doctrine of grace on which the life and happineſs of mankind depends, it is aſtoniſhing how it could enter into any one's head, that it either had, or could have, any bad or prejudicial influence on holineſs of life; when it is the only way in which the heart of a ſinner can be reconciled to God, and the only foundation on which the love of God can ſtand: and ſurely it cannot be refuſed, that perfect love is perfect holineſs, and that there can be no holineſs at all without ſome degree of it.

As the whole of this divine conſtitution, or if any one is pleaſed to call it the

divine law, is founded in Jeſus Chriſt, and his finiſhing the work which the Father gave him to do on earth; and as it is only his right, which, by his death, and what is very properly called his *teſtament*, is made over to all who receive him, it is eaſy to ſee what the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is, and how it is ſo imputed to us, that it becomes a juſt and righteous thing with God to pardon and forgive ſin: but, at the ſame time it is obvious, that the whole is managed and carried on, not in a courſe of law, or legal juſtice, but by a free, ſovereign exertion of mercy and grace, raiſing up the ſinner, whom the original law had brought to death, unto a new and everlaſting life in Chriſt Jeſus.

But as this plan of the conſtitution of grace leaves man nothing to do in his own ſalvation, but only to receive every thing from the hand of God by his free gift of grace, many methods have been taken to mould it either into the form of a new remedial law, or at leaſt a covenant ſtanding upon terms and conditions, ſuch as faith and repentance; to which ſome add ſincere, inſtead of perfect, obedience, and perſeverance to the death. I will only ſay,

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happy it is for mankind that theſe wiſe men were not admitted to ſtand in God's council when he concerted the plan on which ſinners ſhould be ſaved. When we are ſo well aſſured from the God of truth, and the experience of all thoſe who ever tried it in earneſt, that of ourſelves we can do nothing, what uſe could have been made of all the promiſes, ſtanding thus on conditions which could never have been performed? But there is one thing that muſt not be paſſed over, which the Apoſtle takes notice of in Abraham's faith, viz. *that he believed God, and it was imputed*, or reckoned, *to him for righteouſneſs*. Whence it has been alledged, that faith holds the ſame place in the new law, that perfect obedience did in the original one; and therefore that faith is imputed for righteouſneſs, or ſuſtained as ſuch, in virtue of the new conſtitution or law of grace, which the Apoſtle calls *the law of faith*.

Hardly can any thing be imagined more contrary to the Apoſtle's intention in adducing this piece of Abraham's hiſtory. His profeſſed deſign was, to ſhow, that Abraham, with all the good things which were about him, had nothing to boaſt of or

glory in before God; for all the righteouſneſs he had was only imputed or reckoned to him; and, upon the whole, amounted only to this, that he believed God, and the free gratuitous promiſe made to him. It was this that gave him a right to the promiſed bleſſing; and all that his believing could do, was no more than a diſpoſition to receive it as God gave it. That was indeed the only right thing he could do in his ſituation; but all the worth and merit of it amounted to no more than this, that he did not treat the God of truth as a liar, and one not fit to be truſted, or as if the promiſed gift was not worth having. The ſame is the caſe with us, who have the gift of Chriſt, and eternal life in him, held forth in the goſpel, with the fulleſt aſſurances, that all are welcome to take the benefit of it; and that cannot be done but by believing the word and promiſe of God, and that is all that faith can do. And yet, by this ſame believing, we find ourſelves poſſeſſed of as good a right to eternal life, as if we had earned it by the moſt laborious and coſtly ſervice. A free gift gives as good a right as the deareſt purchaſe.

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The Apoſtle leads us into a further view of this ſame imputation of righteouſneſs, by the compariſon he ſtates between the two heads of mankind; Jeſus Chriſt, and Adam, who, he ſays, was the figure or deſigned repreſentation of him. I do not remember that our firſt father's ſin is ever ſaid to be imputed to his poſterity; but the thing is aſſerted in the ſtrongeſt terms, That "by one man's tranſgreſſion, many "were made ſinners," and ſubjected to that very puniſhment which was inflicted on the tranſgreſſor. Preciſely, in the ſame manner, we are told, that "by the obedience "of one, many were made righteous;" and they were made righteous by the gift of grace coming to them, and upon them, founded in the perfect obedience of Chriſt, and his fulfilling the terms of life, by which the gift comes to them perfectly free, and nothing is left to them but to receive what God freely gives in his ever-bleſſed Son.

It has been warmly diſputed, whether the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is imputed to the believer in itſelf, or only in its effects. On an impartial view of the righteouſneſs the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, one ſhould think, that if there ever was ſuch a thing as logomachy

gomachy among diſputants, this muſt be one. Surely no man ever imagined, that God, who ſees all things as they are, ſhould ever reckon, that the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is really the righteouſneſs of the believer; for that is the ſame as to reckon that the believer himſelf performed it. It can be no otherwiſe his, than as the Apoſtle ſays it is, viz. by free gift; and the only way it can be conferred, is by giving the ſinner the full benefit of it; putting this righteouſneſs to his account, and thus transferring Chriſt's right to him; that whatever he receives is the reward, not of what he, but of what Chriſt has done. The promiſes made to Abraham, and the bleſſings conveyed in them, it is evident, were not the rewards or effects of Abraham's faith, or any righteouſneſs of his; but the grounds and foundation on which his faith ſtood. So far as God had ſpoken and promiſed, ſo far had he a good right to believe. But it was not his believing that gave him a right to expect the bleſſings. And well would it be for men, if they contented themſelves to take things in that plain ſimple light in which perfect wiſdom has left them to us, without pretending to model them into the form

form of a human ſcience, or attempting an anſwer to every *how* and *why* that ignorance or malice may caſt in our way.

15. *Abraham's Covenant.*

ABraham's faith we find very highly commended by the Apoſtle; and he ſays no more of it than he gives good reaſons for. Never was faith more ſeverely tried; no, not even theirs who ſuffered the moſt cruel deaths, in the hope, or rather the certain proſpect of eternal life. To ſay nothing of his leaving his native country, and all his connections there, (and in theſe lie all the comforts of life); though that was a great matter, the trying command he received was, to go and ſacrifice his only ſon, and that ſon too in whom all the promiſes, and what is called particularly God's covenant given him, were to be fulfilled. Nothing could ſupport faith in theſe circumſtances, but the firm perſuaſion that God was able to raiſe him from the dead, and that he certainly would do it.

But however ſtrong his faith was in the great eſſential points, as we may call the promiſes

promiſes of that covenant; yet it failed him ſhamefully in leſſer inſtances: for though God had aſſured him, that he was his ſhield or protector, yet on a mere ſurmiſe that his life might be in danger, he twice ventured to ward it off by a lie, or at leaſt by a ſilly equivocation: A uſeful piece of inſtruction to all that hear of it, that the ſtrongeſt and moſt approved faith in God will not be ſufficient to ſupport the poſſeſſors of it, even in the moſt ordinary caſes, when God is pleaſed to leave them to themſelves; and a ſtrong experimental confirmation of what our Lord ſays to his diſciples, "Without me ye can do nothing." Though all the promiſes made to Abraham ſtood on the ſame bottom, the faithfulneſs of the promiſer; yet it is very evident from the tenor of the hiſtory, that what God calls his covenant, and which he promiſes to eſtabliſh with him, is ſomething different from, and of a higher nature than the promiſe of a numerous ſeed, and the inheritance of the land of Canaan. The grant is expreſſed in the ſame terms with that made to Noah; and both moſt evidently had a reference to the original promiſe

miſe, or declaration, if any one chuſes to call it ſo, that the woman ſhould have a ſeed which ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head, and ſhed the blood of him who had ſhed man's blood, who brought in and propagated death among them, as he had promiſed to Noah, and now renewed to Abraham, under the notion of a ſeed in whom all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed.

The terms in which this promiſe or grant was expreſſed, have evidently ſomething very ſingular in them; the *cutting off* or *ſlaying* BERITH; for ſo the word joined with BERITH and tranſlated, *making a covenant*, evidently ſignifies, and is acknowledged ſo to do by all who know any thing of the language, and appears to be the original of the ſeemingly odd phraſe uſed in later languages for making mutual covenants and agreements; and there was ſome good foundation for it, as in the hiſtory written in that language we find the ſame terms made uſe of in ſuch covenants or agreements. But the reaſon commonly given for that ſtrange phraſeology will hardly be thought a good one by impartial judges: for though it may be true

that ſome beaſt or other was ſlain and ſacrificed on theſe occaſions, yet it was the *ſacrifice* that was ſlain, and cut aſunder, and not the *covenant* or agreement: and even the ſlaying of the beaſt was uſed for no other purpoſe but to make a ſanction, and furniſh matter for the curſe the parties took upon themſelves if they ſhould break the agreement. But there is good reaſon to think, that the original of the phraſe was ſomething more cloſely connected, at leaſt with the *matter* of what is called the covenant.

Where things are called by the ſame name in ordinary language, though very different in themſelves, yet they are very readily confounded. And it is not eaſy to ſay what confuſion, and very dangerous miſtakes, men have been led into, by modelling God's covenant upon the tranſactions among men which go by that name. Nothing can be more evident, than that what we call God's covenant with Noah, and Abraham, and we may add David too, was no more than a ſovereignly free, and what we call an abſolute promiſe, of that ſeed on which the faith and hope of all the patriarchs and their ſucceſſors were termina-

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ted, for all the bleſſings ever they had to expect from the hand of God, and which we find continued to be ſo in after ages, down to the very time of the Saviour's coming into the world. This faith was kept awake by the ſucceeding prophets; and the Meſſiah, or ſon of David, was a common article of faith, not only among the vulgar of the Jewiſh nation, but even among the Samaritans, who were treated as aliens by that haughty nation. So free and abſolute was this great promiſe, and all that depended upon it, that there was nothing left to Abraham himſelf to do, but to believe that God would do as he had ſaid, and would not deceive thoſe that truſted to his faithfulneſs. And he is the pattern on which all his genuine children are formed.

From this view of what we call God's covenant, if I am not very much miſtaken, we may get at the true meaning of the word BERITH, and the propriety of that ſtrange-like expreſſion of *cutting off* BERITH, for making a covenant. There is a well-known root in that language, ברר. BARAR, which ſignifies *to purify*, and has a very extenſive application to perſons and things, as waſhing, cleanſing, making

pure, and conſequently perfect in its kind. The ſame individual letters make a word which in two different places our tranſlators render by *ſoap*; and all, both Jews and Chriſtians, are forced to render, by ſomething made uſe of for cleanſing; only the later Jews pointed them differently, and read this BORITH. But however that is, BERITH, by all the rules of that language, comes as naturally from BARAR as BORITH, and as naturally ſignifies ſomething that cleanſes or purifies; ſo that it is hard to ſay what has moved our lexicographers to carry it away from this obvious root, they knew not whither, and forced them to coin one which is no where to be found in the language; and conſequently can have no meaning at all, but the arbitrary one taken from the uſe of CARAT, BERITH, for making a covenant.

Chriſtians, who have the New Teſtament in their hands, know, that ſin is very juſtly repreſented as the grand defilement and pollution; nay, that it was ſo from the time that ſacrifices for ſin came to be in uſe; that there was a cleanſing virtue attributed to their ſhed blood, and the

the ſeveral luſtrations, ſprinklings, and waſhings, which attended that part of worſhip; and that all theſe were but ſhadowy repreſentations of the blood of Jeſus, which cleanſes from all ſin. And if what we juſt now obſerved is true, viz. that what we call God's covenant with Abraham, was really the promiſe of that ſeed, in whom all nations ſhould be bleſſed, and that this bleſſedneſs lay in ſaving them from their ſins, and waſhing them in his own blood, very properly it might be ſaid, that he gave the BERITH, the great and only mean of cleanſing, purifying, and perfecting, the ſinner.

But as it was a long time after that before God's BERITH, the great mean of purification, ſhould be actually exhibited in the world; that it might not be forgotten, and that the only way in which remiſſion and cleanſing from ſin was to be had, might be kept in view, God was graciouſly pleaſed to inſtitute a ſenſible image or figure of it, in ſhedding the blood of ſuch beaſts as he had appointed for ſacrifices. Theſe were the typical or figurative repreſentations of the true BERITH, and therefore took the name that belonged

belonged to him: and they were really the means of purification under the Moſaic law; for the Apoſtle tells us, that the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the aſhes of an heifer, ſprinkling the unclean, did ſanctify to the purification of the fleſh; that is, cleanſed the people from that ceremonial or typical pollution, made ſuch by the law they were under, and which diſqualified them for acceſs to God, and communion with his people in the temple-worſhip.

From this ſketch we may eaſily ſee how the phraſe of *cutting off* a BERITH came to be uſed for making a covenant between man and man. So long as the original import of the phraſe was underſtood, offering, and ſhedding, and ſprinkling, the blood, according to the divine appointment, was really entering into God's BERITH. So God himſelf deſcribes his ſaints, thoſe who have entered into his covenant by ſacrifice. And as that was the moſt ſolemn act that could be performed by man, it was the moſt proper mean that could be deviſed of their mutual aſſurance of integrity and good faith. But after the original intention was loſt, the phraſeology was ſtil

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continued; and the rite degenerated into a mere form, affording only matter for a mutual imprecation or curſe, in caſe of failure.

In this view, it is eaſy to ſee how properly God could ſay, that he gave his BERITH between himſelf and Abraham, viz. the great mediator between God and man; and that he gave his Son, not only for a leader, but a BERITH to the people; who are accordingly called to lay hold of him as God's BERITH, and commended and encouraged when they do ſo; with many other phraſes and expreſſions, which need a great deal of pains to adjuſt (if they can be adjuſted at all) to a covenant in the vulgar ſenſe. Nor do I know any ſingle objection that can be made, unleſs it be, that the ſame phraſe is uſed for common covenants between man and man; which has been already accounted for. Or will any man venture to ſay, that God's covenant and man's are ſo nearly of the ſame kind, that we may judge of the former by what we know of the latter?

It may perhaps be ſaid, that God's covenant with the Iſraelitiſh nation, when he brought them out of Egypt, is expreſſed in the ſame terms with Abraham's, which

which yet was a true and proper covenant. It is to be obſerved, that God's BERITH was given to them in the very terms it was given to their father Abraham, and as it ſtood from the time that man was driven out of paradiſe; and accordingly he declares himſelf to be *their God.* This declaration has been dwindled away to mean no more than that he was their *King*; and on this has been built a ſyſtem of what they call *moral government*, founded on the plan of the kingdoms of this world, where ſubjects have rights as well as the ſovereign, and are in no ſenſe his property. But when the great ſovereign and abſolute proprietor ſays to any, that he is, or will be, their God, it can mean no leſs, than that he will give to them, and do for them, all that he has warranted them to expect from him. I ſay, what he has warranted them to expect; for he can never be a debtor to any of his creatures, unleſs he hath firſt made himſelf ſo by a promiſe. And he never made a promiſe of being a God to any of mankind, but what was founded in Jeſus Chriſt, whom he has given for a BERITH to

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mankind, and in whom all the promiſes of pardon and eternal life are lodged.

It is further to be obſerved, that their entrance into, and poſſeſſion of Canaan, the figure of the heavenly inheritance, was not owing to any covenant or mutual agreement between God and them, but to the ſovereignly free promiſe and oath made to their father Abraham. He had purpoſes of moment in ſettling them there, and accordingly gave them a *law*, which was the tenor whereby they held the poſſeſſion, and was evidently founded in the performance of that promiſe. And this law appears with great evidence to have been wholly intended for preſerving and keeping up the memorial of his BERITH, when the apoſtaſy became ſo general as it did; or, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, "to be a ſchool-"maſter to lead to Chriſt;" and by which they were "ſhut up to the faith which "ſhould afterward be revealed." And indeed all other avenues by which relief could enter, were ſo effectually ſhut up by this law, that there was no way left open but entering upon that method of purification which God had appointed, by believing

on him whom God ſealed, and ſent into the world.

The Apoſtle Paul ſets this whole affair in the cleareſt light, as in the whole tenor of his writings, ſo particularly and of ſet purpoſe in his epiſtle to the Galatians; which they would do well to conſider, who have not ſcrupled to ſay, that the unchangeable God puts off the character of creator, and confines himſelf to that of a moral governor. There were in thoſe days a ſet of men, who were not able to reſiſt the evident proofs Jeſus had given of his being indeed the Chriſt, the promiſed Meſſiah; but at the ſame time, ſo bigotted to the law of Moſes, of which they had loſt the true intention and meaning, that they could not conceive how men could be ſaved but by the obſervance of that law; which yet was altogether inconſiſtent both with the ſpirit of the law itſelf, which could not give life, and with God's way of ſaving ſinners in the way of ſovereign grace.

The Apoſtle, for their conviction, carries them back to the caſe of Abraham, whom they valued themſelves upon as their father. In his epiſtle to the R

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mans, he ſtates his caſe in relation to God, and the promiſes he had from him, and ſhews that they could not be founded on any works of his, becauſe he had none until the promiſes were given. Nay, when by his faith in God, and his wonderful grace, his heart was formed into the natural returns of gratitude and love, yet none of theſe things were ever brought into the account. And even circumciſion itſelf was no more but a ſign appointed of God, as a ſeal of that righteouſneſs by faith which he had while he was yet uncircumciſed.

In his epiſtle to the Galatians, he pitches on the ſame faith of Abraham as the only thing on his part which intereſted him in the promiſed bleſſings, and appeals to that original, or rather early, publication of the goſpel to him; which he makes to conſiſt in this, that all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed in his ſeed; and that none might imagine, that any nation or people deſcending from him was to be ſuch a general bleſſing, he obſerves, that in the very terms of the promiſe the ſeed is limited to one perſon, who is Chriſt. And all that lay hold on this gracious covenant, by believing in Chriſt, are bleſſed

with believing Abraham, or bleſſed as he was, in the way of believing the free promiſe or gift of Chriſt.

This we find is the very goſpel this Apoſtle preached, when he was ſent by a ſpecial commiſſion to the Heathen world: "Be it known to you," ſaid he, "men and "brethren, that through this man is pro- "claimed unto you repentance, and re- "miſſion of ſins; and in him, all that be- "lieve, are juſtified from all things, from "which you could not be juſtified by the "law of Moſes." And what do they believe who thus believe in Chriſt? Surely nothing but this, that God had ſet him forth to be a propitiation; and "that "Chriſt gave himſelf for them, to purify "to himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of "good works; to waſh them from their "ſins in his own blood, and preſent them "pure and perfect unto his heavenly Fa- "ther."

But it might be alledged, and very probably it was, that there was an innovation made by the addition of the law, the inſtrument of moral government. This, the Apoſtle obſerves, could not be the caſe; for the deed of conveyance, confirmed be

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fore by God in Chriſt, could not be ſet aſide by the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, and was added for anſwering quite different ends and purpoſes. This he illuſtrates and proves by the allowed principles of law and juſtice among men; for where a man's teſtament is confirmed by the death of the teſtator, no man pretends to ſet it aſide.

By the word the Apoſtle uſes here, and which our tranſlators render *covenant*, and the margin *teſtament*, we are led to an obſervation which merits peculiar regard. In the Old-Teſtament language, there was only one phraſe, viz. CARAT BERITH, which was promiſcuouſly uſed, either for God's deed, by which he, as it became his ſovereign grace, made a free gift of his Son, and eternal life in him; or for mens covenants and mutual agreements one with another. But, happily for us, the New Teſtament language clears up this ſeeming ambiguity. That language has two words, with two diſtinct and appropriated meanings, and which are never confounded in that language. Συνθηκη is the deed of two or more agreeing on certain terms and conditions, as the very ſound of the word naturally intimates to all who underſtand it. Διαθηκη is the deed of

of one ſingle perſon making a conveyance of his property to another in ſuch a manner as he ſees proper. The moſt common way is by teſtament; but from the effect of that deed to transfer property, it came naturally to be uſed for any grant, or deed of conveyance, which has the ſame effect. The laſt of theſe terms we find conſtantly uſed by the New-Teſtament writers when they ſpeak of what we call God's covenant. And by the Apoſtle's way of ſpeaking, he ſeems to conſider God's *diatheke* as a teſtament, conveying the inheritance to ſuch as he deſigns for his heirs. This is by no means weakly ſupported, by the uniform way of ſpeaking of the conveyance of eternal life, under the notion of an inheritance, riches, a kingdom, glory, honour, and immortality, conveyed to believers as children, and heirs, the children and heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt.

But here there occurs what has been thought an inſuperable difficulty, viz. that God cannot *die*, and therefore cannot convey by *teſtament*; which, as the Apoſtle tells us in another place, can be of no force ſo long as the teſtator lives. Our Apoſtle gives the

the key to this in a ſhort hint. God's [illegible] was confirmed by God in Chriſt. Nor is it of any moment that Chriſt died not for many years after; for he was the ſlain lamb, the true BERITH, the ſacrifice for putting away ſin, in which God reſted, from the foundation of the world.

But our Lord himſelf has perfectly cleared the whole of this aſtoniſhing tranſaction, in the following words to his diſciples, which very probably the Apoſtle had in his eye, Luke xxii. 29. 30. "I appoint "unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath "appointed unto me; that ye may eat and "drink at my table in my kingdom." Here are two diſpoſitions or appointments of the ſame ſubject: The Father, the original proprietor, makes a grant of the kingdom to his beloved Son, the mediator between God and man; through whom only the conveyance could be made to ſinners: and along with it the Son receives a commandment, to do and to ſuffer every thing that was neceſſary for putting away ſin, and rendering it conſiſtent with all the divine perfections to raiſe up the dead ſinner to the poſſeſſion of eternal life. He, on his part, finiſhed the work which the Father gave

gave him to do, cleared the grant, acquired a perfect right to the promiſed inheritance, and had all the fullneſs of it lodged in his hand. Thus the deed of conveyance was confirmed by his death, and thereby made abſolutely irreverſible, and nothing is left to us but to enter upon poſſeſſion; which it is evident can be no otherwiſe done but by believing the truth of the grant, and reſting with becoming confidence on the faithfulneſs of the teſtator, who ever lives a powerful interceſſor, and a captain of ſalvation to bring the ſons of God into glory. And thus the whole terminates, as the Apoſtle John has ſtated it, "in that teſtimony which "God has given concerning his Son; which "teſtimony, whoſoever believes, has the "witneſs in himſelf; but he that believes it "not, makes God a liar." "And this is "the teſtimony or record, that God hath "made us a gift of eternal life, and this "life is in his Son. He that hath the Son," and entereth, by faith, or believing the teſtimony, into God's BERITH, "hath life; "and he that hath not the Son, hath not "life."

16. *Sacrifices*

16. *Sacrifices and Prieſthood.*

AMong all the odd whims ſuperſtition ever brought into the worſhip of the Deity, there is hardly any thing which at firſt ſight appears ſo abſurd as that of ſacrifice; for how can it be ſuppoſed, that the great creator and ſovereign of the univerſe ſhould be pleaſed with ſhedding the blood of animals, and the ſmell of burnt fat; and ſo pleaſed, that, in conſideration thereof, he ſhould pardon the offences of man, turn away from his wrath, and forbear the vengeance juſtly due to them. Nor is the folly of ſuch a perſuaſion any where more ſtrongly expoſed than in the ſacred writings, particularly in the 51ſt pſalm.

And yet it is certain, the practice univerſally prevailed, not only among the rude and ignorant, but more eſpecially among the moſt knowing and civilized nations; where it made the principal part, and in a manner the whole of their religious worſhip. Philoſophers and wiſe men ſaw, and expoſed, the abſurdity of it. But it kept its ground notwithſtanding, in ſpite of all that reaſon

could ſay againſt it. And no wonder it ſhould; for it was powerfully ſupported by an univerſal tradition, that it was of divine inſtitution. This was carried yet farther, when the world loſt ſight of the creator, and took up with the viſible heavens, his agents, and ſplit the ſeveral powers thereof into ſo many deities. Every deity they thought had ordered certain beaſts to be offered, and certain rites to be obſerved in their worſhip; and that ſo ſtrictly, that if any miſtake was committed, the effect of the whole would be loſt.

And ſurely it affords a ſtrong preſumption in favour of the tradition, that a practice, which could never have entered into any man's head, ſhould become thus univerſal; and that from the earlieſt ages. For in all the hiſtories of the world, there is no hint of its firſt inſtitution. Where-ever the hiſtory commenced, even in the darkeſt and moſt fabulous ages, ſacrifices were always found among them. And no wonder; for indeed the practice appears to be very nearly as ancient as the world itſelf. Cain and Abel offered their ſacrifices very early; and though we have no record of the firſt inſtitution,

ſtitution, yet the divine acceptance of Abel's ſacrifice is a ſufficient document of it; Nor have we any reaſon to imagine, that Adam had never offered even before that time, though there is no record of it, nor indeed of any others preſenting ſuch offerings until the deluge. But the diſtinction then ſubſiſting between clean and unclean beaſts, is more than a preſumption that the practice continued. Noah offered immediately after the deluge, and God was pleaſed with it. Abraham built altars wherever he came, and offered ſacrifice; Iſaac and Jacob did the ſame. And when their deſcendents were brought out of Egypt, they had a law given them, wherein this was made the moſt ſolemn part of their worſhip, and very particular directions given about it.

During the patriarchal times, it appears that every man offered his own ſacrifice. There is no mention of any prieſt in thoſe ages, excepting only Melchizedeck, and he appears to have been an extraordinary perſon, raiſed up for anſwering the particular purpoſe of repreſenting the true king of righteouſneſs and peace, the great prieſt over the houſe of God. Neither can I find any good foundation for what ſome

learned men are very poſitive in, that the prieſthood was confined to the firſt-born of the family, and that none might offer but they. Surely Abraham and Jacob were neither of them the firſt-born. The claim afterwards made upon the firſt-born of the Iſraelites ſtood upon another bottom; and the aſſuming the tribe of Levi, and confining the prieſthood to them, was evidently an act of ſovereign authority.

Whence the other nations took the hint of ſetting apart a certain order of men for this part of their worſhip, is not ſo eaſy to ſay. It could hardly come from the Moſaic law, and the practice of the Iſraelites; eſpecially if the men called by the title commonly given to prieſts were really ſuch; and not, as David's ſons were, miniſters of ſtate, who are a ſort of mediators between king and people. But however that was, ſuch an order of men were in every civilized nation; each deity had his own prieſt or prieſts; and an office of great honour and credit it was. No man among the Heathen might offer his own ſacrifice, nor conſult the oracles even in his moſt weighty and ſecret affairs, any more than one among the Iſraelites; among whom it was ſo expreſsly

preſsly forbidden, that the prieſts found themſelves obliged to reſiſt one of the greateſt of their kings when he attempted only to offer incenſe on the altar: and their zeal was juſtified in a very ſenſible manner by God himſelf; the king was ſtruck with leproſy.

We have a number of inſtances on record, which at once prove the divine inſtitution of this ſeemingly irrational piece of worſhip, and God's acceptance of it, by fire from heaven conſuming the ſacrifices; of which we need not give particular inſtances, eſpecially as they were extraordinary caſes, and deſigned to anſwer particular purpoſes. The ſureſt way of adjuſting our notions of it muſt be, a careful conſideration of that ſyſtem of ſacrificature, given with ſuch ſolemnity by the miniſtry of Moſes, by ſpecial divine appointment, and proved to have been ſo by the moſt irreſiſtible evidence. The particulars are numerous, as directed to anſwer all the particular caſes of offences, defilements, and pollutions, that were pardonable by that law: for ſome crimes, particularly idolatry, murder, and ſinning preſumptuouſly, inferred unavoidable death. It will

will be ſufficient for our purpoſe to gather up the conſtituent principles, and what we may call the eſſentials of that part of worſhip.

To do this to any purpoſe, we muſt premiſe, and carry along with us, what, I dare ſay, will be readily agreed to, that the moſt high God, the creator and proprietor of heaven and earth, is ſo perfectly bleſſed and happy in himſelf, and ſo unchangeably ſo, that his happineſs can neither admit of augmentation nor diminution. From which it neceſſarily follows, that whatever laws or ordinances he impoſes upon mankind, neither are, nor can be deſigned for any advantage to himſelf, but purely for the benefit of his creatures, and promoting their perfection and happineſs; which, it is eaſy to ſee, muſt go together, and keep pace with one another. And it would be very eaſy to ſhew, by an induction of particulars, that every ordinance and command of his is calculated to give us ſuch views of God, and what we have to hope or fear from him, as may form our hearts and ſentiments in a ſuitableneſs to theſe views, to direct the conduct of our lives on the principles of true wiſdom,

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the way that leads to final and perfect happineſs, and to reſtrain from ſuch courſes as may mar or hinder our progreſs.

That this was the deſign of the whole ſyſtem of ſacrificature, ſo minutely deſcribed to us, appears very plainly from this ſingle conſideration, that the whole conſiſted of ſuch offerings, as common ſenſe would tell every man, could be of no manner of uſe to God, nor give him any pleaſure, farther than as they ſerved to diſplay and forward his kind and beneficent purpoſes to man.

This will farther appear, from the preparation that was made for this ſervice, in the ſtructure of the tabernacle firſt, and afterwards of the temple, the only place where ſacrifices might be offered, except in extraordinary caſes. Theſe, on the moſt curſory view, appear to have been deſigned for the place of God's reſidence and abode among that people; nor could there well be a fuller intimation, and we may ſay aſſurance, of his gracious intention of dwelling among men, than giving ſuch formal directions as he did to Moſes, for preparing a tent for him to abide in, with the poſitive promiſes

ſes he made of dwelling and taking up his abode there.

But this was too momentous a point to be left to human ſkill and contrivance; nor did perfect wiſdom think it ſufficient to give Moſes, faithful as he was, verbal directions, but ſhewed him a pattern which he was to copy, without the leaſt deviation: "For ſee," ſaid he, "that thou make "all things according to the pattern ſhew-"ed thee in the mount." And there was great reaſon for it. It was the pattern of *heavenly things*; and a ſenſible repreſentation of theſe, none but God himſelf knew how to adjuſt. One cannot paſs this without taking notice of this intereſting inſtance of the divine condeſcenſion. He perfectly knew our frame; what abſolute ſtrangers we were to the ſpiritual world; that it was impoſſible for us to form, not to ſay any idea, but not ſo much as any proper conceptions, of the ſtate of things there, nor indeed any conceptions at all, until they were imaged by ſuch ſenſible things as we are, or may be, acquainted with; and which, if the images are properly choſen, do by a very natural analogy lead us to what

what we could never have otherwiſe come to the knowledge of.

What theſe heavenly things were, of which the tabernacle and its furniture were deſigned to be ſenſible repreſentations, will be no queſtion to any one who conſiders the relation which ſubſiſts between the creator and his creatures; particularly ſuch creatures as all the children of Adam are, laden with ſin and guilt, and bound by the righteous ſentence of the ſovereign under death, which can imply no leſs than putting a final period to the life they poſſeſs, and are ſo very fond of. Whatever ſpeculations men who are at their eaſe, and loth to be diſturbed by melancholy proſpects, may ſooth themſelves with, it is evidently impoſſible for any man, and I may add for any creature, to ſay what will be the end of ſuch criminals, until God, in whoſe hand they are, ſhall declare how he deſigns finally to diſpoſe of them; whether he will leave them to periſh by that death they muſt certainly once undergo, or whether, by an exertion of ſovereign grace, he will raiſe them up to the poſſeſſion of a new and endleſs life.

The merciful creator did not leave his poor helpleſs creatures in ſuch a diſmal ſituation as that of a ſinner muſt have been in this uncertainty. No ſooner had the poor creature fallen, than he kindly took it up, and cheriſhed it with the revelation of his eternal counſels, and the unchangeable purpoſes of his grace, founded in that higheſt inſtance of it, the ſending his own Son to be the ſaviour of the world, not merely to beſtow pardon, but eternal life upon all that would receive it at his hand. This conſtitution of grace, which we call his covenant, containing an authentic ſtate of matters between God and man, as it ſtands confirmed in Chriſt, is undoubtedly the heavenly things which God deſigned to exhibit in the tabernacle and temple ſervice. And to ſee how this repreſentation is adjuſted by the prophets and apoſtles, is a ſtudy which cannot be thought below the greateſt, the wiſeſt, and moſt learned of mankind.

We need only obſerve how, in the ſtructure of the tabernacle and temple, and particularly the moſt holy place, where none might enter but the high-prieſt alone, and that but once a-year, is repreſented the

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true ſanctuary and tabernacle, that heavenly place, where the great high-prieſt of the Chriſtian profeſſion miniſters in the immediate preſence of God. The furniture of the temple, and eſpecially of the moſt holy place, requires our utmoſt attention. There were the ſymbols of God's preſence, and a figure of the heavenly ſanctuary, and the ſtate of things there, imaged by perfect wiſdom; his throne particularly, and his preſence there, to which all their religious ſervices were directed. And it is not to be doubted, that he exhibited himſelf there preciſely as he had manifeſted his glory to Moſes, in proclaiming his name before him, "The Lord God, merciful and "gracious," &c. It was ſo; for the ark with its furniture bore the name of the *propitiatory*, or mercy-ſeat, the image of what the Apoſtle calls the *throne of grace*. There were the cherubims, the ſame for the figure with thoſe which were exhibited on the firſt revelation of the ſyſtem of grace at Eden. They who make theſe laſt angels, and thoſe in the temple figures of them, give but a cold and unintereſting view of him who inhabited them. For what is it to man, that God dwells among the holy angels?

It is ſurely more for their comfort, that the face of a man is found in theſe figures, and united on the ſame ſide with that of the lion. Before theſe figures, and him that inhabited or dwelt in them, the blood was ſprinkled on the great day of atonement, under a cloud of incenſe.

And now that I have mentioned the ſprinkling of blood, it will be proper to take in what the Apoſtle obſerves, Heb. ix. 22. that almoſt all things in that conſtitution were purged by blood. And indeed all things with which the ſinner had any concern; the tabernacle, the altars, with all the veſſels of the miniſtry, and even the book of the law itſelf, were ſprinkled with blood; only the mercy-ſeat was not, but the blood was ſprinkled before it; for that being the exhibition of God's part, was perfectly pure and holy. The Apoſtle concludes with a general aſſertion, that "without ſhedding of blood there was no "remiſſion;" which plainly imports, that ſhedding of blood was the way which God had appointed for putting away ſin; the only way indeed by which it could be done: but, at the ſame time, a way in which it moſt certainly ſhould be done.

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From this general view, it ſeems to appear, that the great creator and ſovereign of the world is not ſet forth in this ſyſtem as the avenger of ſin, however juſtly he might have been ſo, nor as ſuch an enemy to mankind, as that no good can be expected from him till his wrath is aſſuaged, and he pacified, and rendered propitious, by ſhedding the blood, and burning the fleſh of poor harmleſs animals; but, on the contrary, that he is exhibited there preciſely in the ſame light as in Jeſus Chriſt, in whom he hath declared himſelf perfectly well pleaſed. And the great point is not now, nor indeed ever was, to reconcile God to man; that is done effectually: but to reconcile ſinners to God; which cannot be done but by knowing and believing the love of God to a periſhing world, manifeſted and ſealed by the moſt unqueſtionable token that could be given of it, in ſending his only begotten Son into the world, that whoſoever believes in him ſhould not periſh.

Though the Heathen nations were greatly miſtaken in imagining, that their ſacrifices could atone for their ſins, turn away the wrath of their angry gods, or procure

procure the bleſſings they wanted; yet, by conſidering the Jewiſh ritual, and the particulars of the divine inſtitution, even without any farther view, there were many very valuable purpoſes anſwered by it. One of the moſt obvious is, a ſtanding caution againſt that darling principle of the wiſe men of this world, That there is no more neceſſary to ſecure the pardon of ſin, and all the fruits of the divine favour, but repentance and reformation. The whole inſtitution proclaims, that without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion: the offender who deſpiſed the eſtabliſhed order, or even neglected the ſacrifice, and means of cleanſing, appointed for his caſe, died without mercy; he was to be cut off from his people. It was only upon the appropriated ſacrifice being preſented and offered according to the eſtabliſhed order, that the grant of grace had its effect, that the offender's ſin ſhould be forgiven him.

Had there been no more in this but a bare divine appointment, it muſt have had the ſame effect; for as pardon, without all queſtion, is what the ſovereign may withhold at pleaſure, it muſt have been free to him to grant it, on what terms, and

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what manner he pleaſed. There was no injury done the criminal, for he too was at liberty; only he had nothing to hope but from the promiſe annexed to the ſacrifice, and that cut off all hopes in any other way whatſoever.

Upon this principle, the ſinner who brought the ſacrifice, muſt have proceeded. And that implies at once the belief of the free and gratuitous promiſe as it ſtood connected with the ſacrifice, and an abſolute renunciation of all other methods whatever of attaining that favour. And thus he acquieſced in God's way of conveying the bleſſing; and in this very firſt ſtep reſted his faith and hope on the gracious grant which God had made of pardon and life.

Under the influence of this faith and hope, he brought his ſacrifice to the prieſt whom God had choſen and appointed for that office, and confeſſed his ſins over the head of the ſacrifice; by which it was underſtood, as it was expreſsly declared in the inſtitution, that he laid his ſin upon the victim; and of courſe it was ſubjected to the puniſhment which he had deſerved.

The prieſt, by his office, was obliged to take

take his ſacrifice off his hand, and along with it his ſin; not to be ſtained or polluted by it, or loaded with the guilt, but to put it away, by offering the ſacrifice according to the eſtabliſhed order: but from the time the ſacrifice was taken into the prieſt's hands, the ſinner was free; and if there was any error committed in the offering, that lay upon the prieſt, and not upon him; only the ſinner ſtood by, and ſaw the blood of the innocent beaſt ſhed, and its fleſh burnt upon the altar, an awful repreſentation of what he had deſerved and muſt have ſuffered, had it not been for the unmerited favour of a free and gracious pardon.

It deſerves our notice, that, from the time the confeſſion was made over the beaſt intended for ſacrifice, and the offender's ſin laid upon it, the victim took a new name from what was done, and was called *ſin*; and under that deſignation had its blood, which we are often told is the life of the animal, poured out, and itſelf burnt upon the altar. By this we are taught a very important leſſon, That God never pardons a ſinner but where he condemns and deſtroys ſin at the ſame time. His perfect goodneſs, as well as what we call his juſtice,

ſtice, makes it abſolutely neceſſary, that ſin, that great, and in effect only, evil in his ſight, ſhould be deſtroyed out of his world. He has kindly concerted a way by which a ſeparation may be made between the ſinner and his ſin; the ſinner ſaved, and ſin deſtroyed. But if the ſinner will not ſubmit to this gracious proviſion, there is no remedy; he and his ſin muſt be deſtroyed together.

It cannot eſcape the notice of the moſt curſory reader, that when the ſinner makes his confeſſion over the ſacrifice, he of courſe acknowledges his having incurred the penalty of the law, and that he has no longer any right to his life, but in the virtue of the ſacrifice, and the promiſe of pardon annexed to it: and conſequently, renouncing any title he might have had before the forfeiture, he lives ever after purely in the ſtrength of the new grant conveyed in the pardon.

I have not taken any notice of the ſpecial ſolemnity of theſe ſacrifices by which the Iſraelitiſh nation were entered into God's covenant, their daily ſacrifice, the great day of atonement once every year, and the particular ſacrifices of private perſons.

Whatever difference there was in the ſolemnity, and particular circumſtances ſuited to the ſeveral occaſions, all of them agree in anſwering the ſame ends and purpoſes, to be ſhadows, figures, and ſenſible repreſentations of ſpiritual and heavenly things, of the order and method which the moſt high God, in whoſe hands all theſe things are, has eſtabliſhed for conveying pardon and eternal life to ſinners of mankind, and to be an exhibition of himſelf in that light in which the Apoſtle repreſents him; "God in Chriſt, reconciling the world to himſelf."

But, after all, it was impoſſible the blood of bulls or of goats could take away ſin. There was, the Apoſtle juſtly obſerves, a remembrance or recognition made of it every year. Theſe therefore could never give perfect peace to the conſcience of the worſhippers, ſenſible, that ſin was growing upon them every year, nay, and every day; which made the application to the inſtituted means of purification neceſſary; and the proviſion, not only of annual, but of daily ſacrifices, would not ſuffer them to forget it. Thus being weak, and unavailable, the worſhipper's faith and hope

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came to be naturally led to that new and better grant, which ſtands upon better promiſes; where God is pleaſed to take the whole burden upon himſelf, to write his law in the heart, to be their God, and to make them his people; and ſo effectually to put away their ſins and tranſgreſſions, that they ſhall be remembred no more; the grant of eternal life which he had ſealed in the blood of his Son.

And this leads us to another and eſſential weakneſs in the Moſaic ſacrifices, that the only promiſe annexed to the moſt exact compliance was, that the ſin ſhould be forgiven; and that amounted to no more than putting them in the ſame ſtate in which they were before the ſin, thus forgiven, was committed; which reached no farther than a preſent world, and gave no ſecurity at all againſt a new forfeiture. Thus the worſhipper was held in continual uncertainty even about a preſent life, and had no proſpect at all beyond the grave, but in the promiſe of that ſeed in whom all the families of the earth were to be bleſſed.

This promiſe, the goſpel publiſhed to Abraham, was carried down through the

whole duration of the Jewiſh ſtate, and was received and reſted in preciſely in the ſame manner as the goſpel of Chriſt is now, viz. by believing the promiſe, and expecting the bleſſing through the interceſſion and mediation of a greater prieſt, and an infinitely more perfect ſacrifice. The faith of theſe worſhippers was not confined within the narrow bounds of the Moſaic ſacrifices; but at the ſame time that they made their acknowledgements over the beaſt that was to be offered, and had their ſins taken off, and left in the hands of the prieſt who was to offer it, they had their faith and hope fixed on the better promiſe of eternal life, ſecured in the hands of the great prieſt over the houſe of God, the true interceſſor and mediator between God and the ſinner.

And this leads to a farther obſervation: When the Jewiſh prieſt took the ſin of the people upon himſelf, he became ſurety to them that they ſhould be no more burdened with it; but, on the contrary, ſhould be ſecured in the promiſed bleſſing. And accordingly we find it was one eſſential part of his office, to bleſs the people in the name of the Lord. This was done with

with the greateſt ſolemnity when the high prieſt carried the appointed blood into the holy place, and ſprinkled it before the mercy-ſeat.

This explains to us the title which the Apoſtle gives our great high prieſt, when comparing him with the Old-Teſtament prieſts. They were ſureties of that covenant under which they miniſtered, and were bound to do every thing neceſſary for making good the promiſe contained in it: but our Lord taking the ſins of his people upon himſelf, is ſurety of a better covenant; better on account of the better promiſes; not ſimply of pardon, but eternal life. And thus he ſtands bound by his office, not only to put away ſin, but effectually to convey the promiſed bleſſing. This is quite another, and incomparably greater thing, than what ſome have reſted the import of it upon, viz. to be ſurety to God for ſinners, and to make up the honour due to God and his law, by his perfect obedience. Accordingly, when our great high prieſt had effectually put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf, and entered into the true holy place, the very preſence of God, with his own blood; he had

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all the bleſſings ever God deſigned for mankind, eternal life, with all that belongs to it, all that is neceſſary for beginning, carrying it on, and perfecting it in glory, lodged in his hands.

Upon reflection even on this faint ſketch, and yet more as it ſtands in the record, it will appear, that our Lord's terms of diſcipleſhip, *to deny ourſelves, to take up our croſs, and to follow him*, are really no more than what every man who brought a ſacrifice was bound to, and, if he was in earneſt, certainly did practiſe. He renounced all right or title to life, could have no dependence on any thing he had done, or could do, and betook himſelf to the free grant of pardon, and the new right to life there given him.

There has been great fault found with a term commonly made uſe of in deſcribing the effect of Chriſt's prieſthood and ſacrifice, viz. his ſatisfying the juſtice of God, or the demands of his law. It is true, the word *ſatisfaction* is no where to be found in ſcripture; and perhaps ſome accounts which have been given of it are not altogether proper. But as there can be no doubt made of his having punc-

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tually discharged every part of the priestly office, by taking upon himself the sins of all that come to him in this character, and thus being *made sin for them*, as the Old-Testament sacrifices were, and accordingly binding himself to put them away, which he actually did by his one sacrifice; and all this being done by the direction of his heavenly Father, and in obedience to the command he received from him; he thus finished the work which was given him to do, and perfectly fulfilled the terms on which the disposition or grant of eternal life was made to him in behalf of a perishing world. When these things are considered, the term, making full *satisfaction*, is by no means improper. But when men are agreed in the matter, it seems hardly becoming men of learning and candour to fall out with one another about a word.

19. *The import of the word* God.

THE often repeated promise of being God to this or the other person or people, naturally leads one to consider what

what it is to be *God* to one. The very words carry in them an intimation of what is commonly obſerved, that it is a relative term, and very different from another, which we render *Lord*. It is agreed by all, that JEHOVAH is an eſſential name; and it will be eaſily allowed, that the Apoſtle John's is the beſt tranſlation of it, "He "who is, and was, and is to come;" the eſſential poſſeſſor and proprietor of being. Our tranſlators have been very juſtly complained of for rendering this by the relative term, *Lord*, after the later Jews, whoſe ſuperſtition not permitting them to pronounce this name, always ſubſtitute *Adoni*, *Lord*, inſtead of it. But certainly they ought not to be followed by Chriſtians.

There would be the ſame ground of complaint for rendering the original name *Elohim*, which is plural, by the ſingular word *God*, the origin and meaning of which is not certainly known, had not the writers of the New Teſtament uſed a word of as uncertain derivation. And there are but two ways I know of by which the import of it can be aſcertained; either to have recourſe to the Old-Teſtament name, or to gather up the particulars which are found

found to be comprehended in this ſhort expreſſion of *being a God to one*. And if theſe two are found to agree perfectly, we may be well aſſured, that we have fallen upon the true import and meaning of it.

The original word ſtands pointed ELOHIM. Thoſe who look upon pointing as a modern invention of the apoſtate Jews, and with no good deſign, and therefore diſregard it altogether, read ELAHIM, and others ALEIM: the letters are the ſame, only aſſigning different powers.

The word evidently carries a plural form; and that has occaſioned a variety of ſpeculations, many of them little to any good purpoſe, and as ill founded. But when it is conſidered how propenſe the people were to idolatry and polytheiſm, the import of it cannot be the ſame with our word *God*: for that would have led them to ſpeak juſt as the Heathen did; "The Gods do, or did, ſo and ſo." And perhaps this very word carried off, and brought into common uſe, without knowing what was deſigned and intended by it, might give countenance, if not riſe, to that unnatural notion of many gods.

They who are beſt acquainted with the genius of the language, ſhew a great inclination to derive it ſome how from *ala*, an oath; and ſome, on no contemptible grounds, ſay poſitively, that a word of preciſely the ſame letters ſignifies a *ſwearer*, or one that gives or takes an oath; and which, they are poſitive, is the ſingular of *Elahim* or *Aleim*. But then this ſuppoſes a plurality of *Elahs* or *Ales*. And indeed if there be not, it is quite unaccountable, how the creator of heaven and earth, the God of Iſrael, came to aſſume a plural name. Surely he who made the world, and taught the firſt man the uſe of language, could eaſily have found a word which could not be miſconſtructed or abuſed as this plural name has been.

This obſervation is conſiderably ſtrengthened by the other eſſential name, JEHOVAH, which is commonly joined with this, and has no plural; which naturally leads one to think, that in the one undivided eſſence there are ſubſiſting more *Ales* than one, who, for want of a proper word in the modern languages, are called perſons, very apt to miſlead one into a notion of three beings ſubſiſting ſeparately, which would

would be three Gods. Whereas, in the original language, there is one JEHOVAH, and three ELAHIM. I ſay three; becauſe throughout the record they are found to be three; the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; ſhadowed and repreſented by the three agents in the material world, viz. fire, light, and air; and very often called by their names:—"Our God is a conſuming "fire;"—"The Word made fleſh;"—"The true Light that enlightens every "man that cometh into the world."

But when all this is ſuppoſed, and even made good, the doubt remains, How and on what grounds theſe three take the name of *Elohim?* And this will lead us to the ſecond way I mentioned of coming at the right meaning of our word *God*; by conſidering what God does, or binds himſelf by promiſe to do, when he undertakes to be *God* or *Elohim* to any one, or what they have to expect who have him to be their *Elohim.*

There are three words or terms we find very frequently made uſe of, and applied to him, who is JEHOVAH ELAHIM; *King*, *Father*, *Lord*; all relative, and the relation intimated by them well known among

men. The great, and the only proper uſe of them is, to help us to form our conceptions of him, who is in himſelf abſolutely incomprehenſible; that is in the way of analogy; what a king is to his ſubjects, a father to his children, and a lord or maſter to his ſervants or *ſlaves*, (for that is the original word), that JEHOVAH ELAHIM is to thoſe to whom he is *Elahim*. But ſure none will imagine, that he is ſuch a king, father, or lord, as men are to one another. All analogical or tranſlated terms need a great deal of adjuſting to reduce them to propriety; and therefore none of them can give the true import of the term which his perfect wiſdom has ſeen fit to uſe. Could we conceive a kingdom or family where all the ſubjects are children of him who is lord or king, by uniting all the three, we might carry our conceptions a good way, but ſtill greatly ſhort of the truth.

There is another word commonly uſed among men, and the import of it rather better underſtood; a *Saviour*, *Redeemer*, or *Deliverer*; which have nearly the ſame meaning, though perhaps ſome circumſtantial difference. Thoſe who have ever read tl

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Bible with any attention, muſt have obſerved, that this is often joined with *Jehovah* in the ſame manner as *Elohim* is; which naturally leads one to think, that they are either ſynonymous terms, or ſo nearly allied, that one cannot be without the other. Thus particularly he promiſed, and thereby engaged himſelf, to be the *Elohim* of Abraham and his ſeed, and as ſuch to give them the land of Canaan for a poſſeſſion. And in virtue of this promiſe, he found himſelf bound to deliver them from the bondage and tyranny of Pharaoh and his Egyptians. Nor did he find himſelf diſcharged of this obligation, until he had put them in poſſeſſion of the promiſed land. And on this foundation it is that he aſſumes the title and rights of their *Lord* and *King*, tempered with the amiable and endearing title of *Father*.

It is, I believe, agreed among all Chriſtians, that the whole affair of old Iſrael, and particularly their deliverance from Egypt, and being put into the poſſeſſion of the promiſed land, was a type or figure, a ſenſible repreſentation, of deliverance from an infinitely worſe bondage, under ſin and death, and him who hath the power of death,

death, that is, the devil, who leads the poor thoughtleſs race of Adam captives at his will. For this purpoſe the only Son of God was ſent to be the *Saviour* of the world. And to have a fair view of this divine name, we can have no better directory than the conſtitution of grace, as it was at firſt revealed to mankind immediately after the fall, and carried on from time to time by the miniſtry of the Old-Teſtament prophets, until it was perfected in Jeſus Chriſt.

There is one great point we are directed to by the Iſraelitiſh covenant, or the grant of Canaan: That it was made to Abraham, the choſen head and father of that people, and confirmed by an oath; a wonderful piece of condeſcenſion! And this we find always referred to as the reaſon of God's gracious forbearance of that people under their manifold provocations. Through him, and in virtue of the promiſe made to him, all the favours he beſtowed were conveyed. Our Lord gives us the counter part, or what was repreſented by it, in theſe words, formerly quoted: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my "Father hath appointed unto me; that ye "may

" may eat and drink at my table in my king-
" dom." This is a key to the whole teſtimo-
ny of God, by which the frame of the con-
ſtitution, or what we call the covenant,
of grace, is adjuſted; how the method of
grace takes its riſe, and is carried on to
the full completion of it, in bringing ſin-
ners, rebels, enemies, to be the ſons of
God, and in bringing the ſons of God in-
to glory. And could it be known when
and how this grant was made to Jeſus
Chriſt, we ſhould, I believe, ſee the true
meaning of this very ſignificant name *E-
lohim*.

That the plan of this divine conſtitu-
tion was laid in the eternal counſels of
God, all Chriſtians muſt allow. They who
believe the doctrine of the Trinity, muſt
believe, that Father, Son, and Spirit, were
equally concerned in it. It muſt likewiſe
be acknowledged, that Jeſus Chriſt, the
Son, or Word incarnate, was laid at the
foundation, and on him the whole was
built; conſequently that he bore that charac-
ter from the date of theſe eternal counſels;
and of courſe that the grant of eternal life,
or the gift and diſpoſition of the kingdom,
was made to him in that ſame character;
that

that is, in our low way of apprehending the thing, the three *Elohim* made a grant to one of themſelves, ſuſtaining that character. And we are ſure enough, that the grant ſtood on certain terms; for the character he bore was that of a prieſt, whoſe principal buſineſs was, to put away ſin by the appointed ſacrifice; and in this caſe it was by the ſacrifice of himſelf. His prieſthood therefore muſt be of the ſame date with the grant.

He was a prieſt therefore of an order peculiar to himſelf, a prieſt after the order of Melchiſedeck; that is, ſuch a prieſt as was at the ſame time a king; and, as the Apoſtle explains it, king of righteouſneſs, and king of peace. And we are well aſſured, that the whole was ratified and confirmed by an oath, the oath of all the *Elohim*; or, which is the ſame thing, the oath of *Jehovah*: "Jehovah hath ſworn, "and will not repent, Thou art a prieſt "for ever, or an eternal prieſt." And thus the Apoſtle illuſtrates the peculiar dignity of his prieſthood above the Levitical, that he was made or conſtituted prieſt with an oath, Heb. vii. 21.

This brings us directly to the native ſenſe of this divine name; and at the

ſame

ſame time ſhews it to be wiſely choſen, and to carry in it what is of the utmoſt importance to mankind; every thing they want in order to their preſent and future happineſs. Literally it is *the ſwearers:* and that neceſſarily takes in what is ſworn to; the whole ſyſtem of grace, and all that God has promiſed to give to mankind in and by his bleſſed Son. The very name carries in it the moſt endearing view one can poſſibly imagine of any being, and a fund inexhauſtible of the ſtrongeſt conſolation.

It is in this view the Apoſtle repreſents God's oath to Abraham. "He ſware by "himſelf, ſaying, Surely, bleſſing, I will bleſs "thee." "—that by two immutable things, "wherein it was impoſſible for God to lie, "we might have a ſtrong conſolation," &c. It might readily be ſaid, What is God's ſwearing to bleſs Abraham to us? Indeed it would be nothing, were it not for the matter of that bleſſing, the ſeed to whom the promiſes are made, and for the hope ſet before us in him; by flying to which, they who do ſo, contract a new relation to this father of the faithful or believers, and thereby become heirs of the ſame pro-

miſes, and Jehovah ſtands engaged to be their *Elahim* as well as his.

18. *The Propitiatory, or Mercy-ſeat.* Rom. iii. 25; Heb. ix. 5.

BY comparing theſe two places together, we will eaſily perceive, that the Apoſtle means to tell us, that what the mercy-ſeat was in the tabernacle and temple, that Jeſus Chriſt is in the true and heavenly temple. Jehovah Elahim dwelt between, or inhabited, the cherubims of glory, which ſhadowed the mercy-ſeat; for ſo they did with their wings touching one another. And thus our Lord tells us, that he is in the Father, and the Father in him; and that in Chriſt, as his reſt, the Father is well pleaſed. His dwelling in the cherubims was the ſenſible ſign of his dwelling among the Iſraelites, and being their Elahim. His dwelling in Chriſt is incomparably more ſo to us, when he hath given his only begotten Son, and by him united himſelf to this order of creatures. They who receive him as he is given, can have no doubt of God's dwelling with men upon

upon earth, and that Jehovah is their Elahim.

But the title given by the Apoſtle, both to the type and to the antitype, carries ſomething farther in it; not only the truth of the thing, but the reaſon of it. ἱλαστήριον, which is the original term in both the paſſages referred to, is more than ἱλασμός. The firſt is a *propitiatory*, the laſt is *propitiation*, the fruit or effect of it. This may perhaps be the reaſon why, in Rom. iii. 25. (where ἱλαστήριον, inſtead of *a propitiatory*, is rendered *a propitiation*), our tranſlators have inſerted the ſupplement *to be*, which would have been needleſs had they kept by the native import of the original word. A propitiatory is that which makes the propitiation; for that is the ſame thing as making one propitious or gracious, who either had reaſon to be offended, or from whom there was no reaſon to expect ſuch favours.

One needs no more but to read the hiſtory of the old Iſraelites, to be aſſured, that they had no reaſon to expect ſuch extraordinary favours as were ſecured for them in the promiſe made to Abraham. And they muſt be ſtrangers indeed to what obviouſly appears to be the ſtate of mankind, who do not find incomparably leſs

reaſon to expect ſuch favours as the grant made to Jeſus Chriſt in their behalf; the grant, not only of the pardon of ſin, but of eternal life, with all the perfection, glory, and happineſs, which attend it. That the great creator and ſovereign of the univerſe ſhould be thus propitious, and ſhew ſuch favours to ſuch creatures, requires ſuch a foundation to make it conſiſtent with perfect wiſdom, the higheſt reaſon, as none but he who is poſſeſſed of it, could either find, or lay: and firm and ſtrong it muſt not only have been, but appeared to men to be, which had the whole weight of the firmeſt faith and hope in God to bear.

The aſſurance which Jehovah gave to ancient Iſrael of being their Elahim, by fixing his throne, a throne of grace, among them, even on this curſory view, appears to have been very great. But if we may ſuppoſe, that they underſtood at the ſame time what was repreſented by the ark, with the law in it, covered with the mercy-ſeat, and cherubims of glory, which were but figures for the time then preſent, and ſhadows of heavenly things, they muſt have had the ſame views which we have now, of the

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new head of mankind, deſigned from eternity the great prieſt-interceſſor, the ſurety of the everlaſting covenant or grant of eternal life. In him, the promiſed ſeed, they would find the great propitiatory, the true foundation and mean of conveyance of all that favour and grace they received, or hoped to receive, from the hand of God; and muſt have ſeen, that the only way in which they or we can believe that God is, or will be, propitious, is faith, or a believing dependence on his blood; by the ſhedding of which, he finiſhed the work that was given him to do, fulfilled the terms of the grant made to him, and made over the ſame kingdom by his teſtament to all who would receive it from his hand, and hold it in his right.

19. *Reconciliation.*

THE direct and immediate, and, I may ſay, the neceſſary, fruit and effect of a propitiatory, is propitiation. And when God has ſet forth his ever-bleſſed Son a propitiatory, it gives a firm and ſure foundation for the ſtrongeſt confidence, that,

that (it is not, I think, proper to ſay, he will be propitious, but that) he certainly is propitious; that is, as he proclaimed his name to Moſes, "Jehovah Elahim, gracious "and merciful, long-ſuffering, ſlow to "wrath, and of great patience, forgiving "iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin." That this is a juſt account of the divine nature, and which we may call his very eſſence, appears abundantly from this ſingle conſideration, that, of his own proper motion, without any external motive, he provided and eſtabliſhed the great propitiatory. And as that was eſtabliſhed from eternity in the unchangeable counſels of the Elahim, from the ſame æra we muſt date his being propitious. So that there never was a time when he could be called an enemy to mankind; though they had deſerved to be treated as enemies, becauſe they were really ſo to him; enemies in their minds through wicked works.

God indeed is ſaid to be "angry with "the wicked every day," and to have "re-"vealed his wrath from heaven againſt all "ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men." But a father may be angry, very angry, with his children, and ſhew his wrath by puniſhing

puniſhing them ſeverely for their faults; while yet he is ſo far from being their enemy, that this very anger, and the ſtrongeſt expreſſions he can give of it, not only proceed from love, but are the ſtrongeſt evidence of his concern for their welfare. It would be enough to ſay, that this is the very caſe with God; but there is more in it. The faults of children not only reflect diſgrace on their parents, but are otherwiſe often hurtful to their intereſts. But as creatures can bring no advantage to the creator by all the good they can do; ſo neither can their wickedneſs hurt him any farther than by marring the effects of his love either in themſelves or others. And therefore the only reaſon of his anger and wrath, muſt be, concern for the good of his creatures, according to his kind and gracious purpoſes ſet forth in his bleſſed Son, the great and only propitiatory, that ſin may be deſtroyed, and the ſinner ſaved.

It will be proper, however, to obſerve here, that there is no foundation in all this for that very looſe aſſertion, which ſome people, for very obvious reaſons, appear extremely fond of, viz. That God never puniſhes an offender but with

a view to the advantage of the party ſuffering. Such is the eſſential goodneſs of the great creator and ſovereign of the univerſe, that he cannot but hate, with the moſt perfect hatred, (if that expreſſion may be allowed), all that kind of evil which goes under the name of *ſin*; the only evil he hates, and which he therefore will certainly deſtroy out of his world. He has indeed appointed, in his perfect wiſdom, a way in which ſin may be deſtroyed by the ſacrifice of his bleſſed Son, the great propitiatory; and they who ſincerely and heartily acquieſce in it, may be as ſure of pardon and eternal life as God can make them. But if any ſinner will, in any inſtance, make the God of truth a liar, and neglect his great ſalvation, he and his ſin muſt be deſtroyed together.

But however that may be, nothing can be more evident from the whole of the divine conduct, than that God is not, that he never was, nor indeed can be, an enemy to mankind: and therefore to talk of his being *reconciled*, muſt be rather ſomething worſe than an improper way of ſpeaking, as it has a native tendency to confirm a ſinner in that very injurious notion of God, which

which nothing but an evil conſcience could ever have ſuggeſted, and is the occaſion of all thoſe doubts, fears, jealouſies, and evil ſurmiſings, wherein the ſtrength of that aſtoniſhing ſin of unbelief lies. There likewiſe lie the roots of that heart-enmity againſt God, which is the ſpring of all ſin. For ſo long as we conſider him as an enemy, how is it poſſible we can love him? The Chriſtian duty of loving our enemies has a foundation both to recommend and enforce it, which can have no place here: it is the knowledge and belief of the love of God as manifeſted in Chriſt Jeſus; and that is the only thing that can deſtroy our natural enmity, and plant the love of God in our hearts.

There are indeed ſeveral texts in our tranſlation of the Old Teſtament which ſeem to ſpeak of God's being reconciled to ſinners. But by the moſt curſory glance on the original and context, they only ſeem to do ſo: for in thoſe very caſes it plainly appears, that God is ſo far from being an enemy, or acting as ſuch, that the whole deſign of thoſe tranſactions is, to convince ſelf-condemned ſinners of the groſs miſtake, and thereby to reconcile their hearts

to him, by deſtroying the very roots of their enmity againſt him.

This is the view which the writers of the New Teſtament uniformly give of the buſineſs of reconciliation. The Apoſtle, Rom. v. 10. ſtates the caſe plainly: "If when "we were enemies, we were reconciled to "God by the death of his Son; much more, "being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his "life." And yet more plainly, becauſe more fully, 2 Cor. v. 18. 19. 20. "All things are of "God, who hath reconciled us to himſelf "by Jeſus Chriſt," &c. Theſe words need no commentary. So far is God from being an enemy, that his declared purpoſe is, to reconcile us to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt. And he hath taken the moſt kind and endearing methods to effect it: Not contented with ſending his bleſſed Son into the world, the moſt undoubted token of his warmeſt friendſhip and tendereſt love, he hath appointed an order of men, whom the Apoſtle calls *ambaſſadors for God*, whoſe office it is to beſeech and pray ſinners, in Chriſt's name and ſtead, to be reconciled to God.

This naturally leads us to a more particular conſideration of the method the wiſdom of God hath choſen for reconciling the world

world to himſelf; very different indeed from that which the philoſophers and wiſe men of the world have pitched upon. The wiſeſt of the Heathen had nothing either to aſſiſt or ſupport their reaſoning powers, but fragments of old traditions, very imperfect, and miſerably mangled: and yet upon theſe we ſhall find that all their ſublimeſt notions of religion were originally founded; and they muſt either have made what they could of them, or have thrown up the purſuit altogether. Accordingly one, who was reckoned the wiſeſt of them, choſe the laſt; and attempting to put aſunder what the creator had inſeparably joined, contrived a ſyſtem of what is called *morality*, inſtead of religion.

Our lateſt philoſophers, who ought to have known better, ſeem to value themſelves on merely copying after this pattern; and what their predeceſſors were forced into by their circumſtances, they have made their choice. The knowledge of God was in the days of the former very low. As they had no convincing evidence that all things in the univerſe were once nothing, they could have no notion of the diſtinguiſhing character of the true God, viz. *the creator of heaven*

and earth, but what came by a faint tradition: yet this is the firſt and fundamental principle of all religion, that it is only by the ſovereign favour and grace of the creator that any creature can ſubſiſt. The moſt they could make of the character of Deity, was that of an univerſal monarch; and even this they were forced to limit by ſuch reſtrictions as are neceſſary among men for preventing the abuſe of abſolute power. A wiſe and righteous moral governor was the beſt they could make of what they called *God*; and the meaſures of his government were, rewards and puniſhments, in ſuch proportion as the philoſopher thought right.

Our moderns are nothing near ſo excuſeable: for though they, no more than thoſe, either know, or can ſo much as imagine, any power adequate to ſuch an effect as the producing a real being out of nothing; though they neither have, nor poſſibly can have, any ſatisfying evidence, that this univerſe was once nothing, or even in any other ſtate than it has been in ever ſince there were men to obſerve it; yet they boldly take it for granted, that all theſe things are the works of that being which they call *God*; and on this bottom build a

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ſyſtem of what they call natural religion, and ſuch a plan of moral government as their Heathen predeceſſors groped out for themſelves before them. And all their buſineſs is not ſo much how to reconcile themſelves to God, as how to placate and reconcile a ſovereign who has the greateſt reaſon to treat them as enemies. An arduous taſk this! But the men are ſo fully perſuaded of the all-ſufficiency of their own rational powers, that they ſcorn to have any recourſe to foreign aſſiſtance, unleſs perhaps to men who have wrought upon the ſame plan before them.

Were men indeed as innocent as when the firſt of the kind came out of the creator's hands, the immenſity of perfection that appears in the works which the being we call *God* is ſuppoſed to be the author of, could not fail to produce the higheſt degree of eſteem, the profoundeſt awe and reverence. And if they were perſuaded at the ſame time, that they owed their lives and all their enjoyments and pleaſures of life to him, there would likewiſe be ſomething of gratitude. This would of courſe produce anſwerable meaſures of love, were not the operation

operation marred, partly by the terrors of majeſty ſo infinitely above them, but eſpecially by the uncertainty of what they have to hope or fear from him, or how he means finally to diſpoſe of them. Innocent creatures can never arrive at ſuch a pitch of arrogance as to claim any thing as their due; they find themſelves abſolutely in the hand of their creator, and know not how ſoon he may ſee fit to put an end to their being. This reflection comes with redoubled force on all mankind, who certainly know they muſt die; and that looks ſo like putting an end to their being, that the very thought chills the heart, caſts a damp upon all the comforts and joys of life, and of courſe deadens gratitude, and leaves the heart in a ſtate of cold indifference at beſt: and ſo long as they know of no other life, nor any other way of living, jealouſies and fears readily creep in, that, after all God has done for them, he may yet be ſo much their enemy, as to deprive them of all he has given.

Though this temper is bad enough, and ſo immenſely ſhort of that ardency of love which is ſtrictly due to a benefactor of ſo much worth and excellence, it were well

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if the parties reſentment ſtopt there. But creatures made as we are, for a preſent world, and with hearts and ſentiments formed upon the pleaſures and gratifications in the way of living here, will find it very hard to be deprived of them all, as death certainly will deprive us of all; and will ſcarcely be able to avoid wiſhing, that the firſt and beſt of beings were ſo much better, or more indulgent, as to continue us in the eternal poſſeſſion of what our hearts are ſo warmly attached to: and when we are ſure this cannot be, muſt not the ſeeds of enmity be deeply planted there, though we dare not allow ourſelves to acknowledge them?

But none of the deſcendents of Adam are, or can be, in a ſtate of mere innocence. Every creature of God was deſigned to anſwer ſome purpoſe or other. While they do ſo, they continue innocent; but no longer; the leaſt failure is criminal in ſome degree. Whatever other purpoſes man was deſigned to anſwer, it may not be doubted, that he ſtood bound in the ſtrongeſt manner to acknowledge his creator, and all his benefactions, with the natural homage

mage of adoration, the warmeſt gratitude and love, and of courſe a hearty acquieſcence in every intimation of his will; which cannot ſubſiſt without a thorough confidence in his wiſdom and goodneſs. Where this is refuſed, or even neglected, the man becomes criminal; and if he continues in that way, becomes a rebel to the great ſovereign.

That all the children of Adam are ſinners, is a truth ſo obvious, and ſo univerſally acknowledged, that it would be idle to ſpend words on it. For however earneſt we may be in aſſerting our innocence in particular inſtances, none were ever yet found ſo mad as to ſtand upon their abſolute innocence; and if we once admit that we are ſinners, it follows of courſe that we are abſolutely at the creator's mercy. It is without all diſpute free to him either to pardon or to puniſh. But, all things conſidered, it will be found infinitely more probable, that he will puniſh. His very goodneſs ſerves to make it neceſſary: For how can a being, who perfectly hates, and cannot look upon this evil, ſuffer it in his world? At any rate, we can never be ſure he will pardon, unleſs he ſhall tell us ſo; nor how,

how, and on what terms he will do ſo, but by the intimation of his will. Thoſe who know God's perfect goodneſs, and abhorence of ſin, will find all the reaſon in the world againſt it. Sin, we are ſure, muſt be condemned and deſtroyed; and how that can be done without condemning and deſtroying the ſinner, is beyond the reach of created wiſdom to ſay.

There lies the foundation of that enmity ſo deeply inlaid in the heart of every child of Adam, until they are reconciled to God. It is not, I believe, in the power of any creature, but certainly it is not in the power of man, to love or hate at pleaſure, and merely becauſe he chuſes to do ſo. There muſt be ſomething in the object that determines us either way, and touches the heart in a manner that is not always eaſy to be accounted for. We naturally, and, I think, one may ſay, neceſſarily, love what appears good, and in the ſame manner hate what appears evil. No body will deny, that God is perfectly and abſolutely good, and worthy of the higheſt meaſure both of our eſteem and love. But abſolute goodneſs, however it may approve itſelf to the judgement, never touches the

heart, unleſs we find our own intereſt in it. Until we believe that God is good to us, and according to our notions of goodneſs too, the higheſt approach to him goes no further than a cold approbation. But if we perceive, or imagine we perceive, any thing in his character inconſiſtent with what we find our pleaſure in, it is impoſſible we can be pleaſed with him; and ſo much as is wanting of that, ſo much enmity muſt be found in the heart, however carefully concealed. And ſuch is the ſtate of every heart where the love of a preſent world is the ruling paſſion. But if one comes ſeriouſly to believe, that however good he is in his general character, he is an irreconcileable enemy to ſin; he will eaſily believe what an evil conſcience ſuggeſts, that the ſinner has nothing to expect but everlaſting deſtruction from his preſence.

How hard it is to reconcile a ſinner to God, we may eaſily judge, by the meaſures which infinite wiſdom has taken to accompliſh it, and the little ſucceſs they had with the generality of mankind. Seneca tells us of a love-charm preſcribed

by an old philoſopher, *If you want to be beloved, love.* And it is the only means that ever did, or ever will ſucceed. It is the way perfect wiſdom has taken to reconcile ſinners, enemies to God in their minds, and root out thoſe fears, jealouſies, and miſgivings of heart, ſuggeſted by an evil conſcience, and the love of a preſent world; which are ſo ſtrong, that we may boldly ſay, nothing but the knowledge and belief of the love of God as manifeſted in Chriſt, can effectually balance the heart againſt them, and recover it to God.

Much has been ſaid by men at eaſe of the divine placability, and the mercy and compaſſion ſo eſſential to his perfect nature. But when all is ſaid on that ſubject that can be ſaid, our hope can riſe no higher than a bare poſſibility; *it may be*, that the God whom we have ſo long and ſo ſhamefully affronted, may be ſo good as to pardon us. But *it may alſo be*, that his wiſdom may ſee fit to puniſh us; and the probability certainly lies on that ſide. But ſuppoſe we ſhould carry it as high as the moſt ſanguine hope can go, and that we might be ſure he will pardon all that is paſt, what would be the effect of it? A bare pardon can only re-

ſtore us to the caſe we were in before the ſin was committed; but gives no ſecurity againſt after ſinning, and the puniſhment that it will deſerve; which muſt of courſe be greater, as the provocation is higher. Nay, and if we ſhould be even ſecured againſt that, the effect could only be, leaving us in the quiet poſſeſſion of a preſent life, and what we can make of a preſent world: and to that we know death will very ſoon put a final end; and there is an end of all our hopes, unleſs we have the proſpect of another life, after theſe bodies, which make an eſſential part of the man, are diſſolved into inanimate duſt.

Much has been ſaid of the natural immortality of the ſoul: It is a ſpirit, and ſpirits cannot die, as animals do, by a diſſolution of the component parts. But death and annihilation are two different things: and, notwithſtanding the very poſitive aſſertions of philoſophers ancient or modern, we are very ſure the ſoul is not the man, but a component part of him; and however it may ſubſiſt after ſeparation from the body, the man, the child of Adam, is dead, and can never live more, unleſs ſoul and body are again united.

united. A ſeparate ſoul is a being of a quite different kind; and how it ſubſiſts and lives, what its buſineſs is, and wherein the pleaſures and enjoyments of that life lie, the wiſeſt philoſopher may imagine, but really can know no more of, than the moſt ignorant peaſant.

Theſe ſort of views, it is evident, are by much too faint to balance the heart againſt the loſs of a preſent life, and all the comforts we preſently poſſeſs, or might hope to enjoy, if we could be ſure of the continuance of it: ſo that, upon the whole, we ſhall have more reaſon to be diſpleaſed than delighted with the proſpect; and of courſe find nothing to endear to us the character of the ſovereign diſpoſer of all. But if we could be ſure of another, a better and happier life to continue for ever, after death has put an end to this ſhadow of life we derive from Adam, the caſe would be greatly altered, and the divine character appear in ſuch an amiable light, as would at once captivate the heart into the warmeſt ſentiments of gratitude and love.

But this is an aſſurance that none but God himſelf can give; and he has given it in

in the moſt endearing manner in the record he has made, and the teſtimony he has given concerning his Son: For this is the record, that he has given us eternal life; and, for greater ſecurity, lodged it where it muſt be perfectly ſafe, even in the hands of his bleſſed Son; lodged it as certainly there, as he has ſent his Son to be the ſaviour of the world; and not only allowed, but commanded, every man, without exception, to receive him, and to truſt in him, not only for pardon, but eternal life, in a perfect conformity to the ſtandard of perfection, Jeſus the Son of God, exalted as he is at the right hand of the Majeſty on high. If we know this Jeſus, and truſt him as he deſerves, we muſt know and believe the love of God to us, and love him who firſt loved us.

20. *Regeneration, and Eternal Life.*

THE grace of God which brings ſalvation, and his love to man, have appeared in ſuch a ſtrong and ſurpriſing light, in the gift he has made of Jeſus Chriſt, with not only pardon, but eternal life in him, that it i

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quite aſtoniſhing how any ſinner that hears the report of it, can be hardened to ſuch a degree of perverſeneſs, as to neglect ſo great a ſalvation. But experience aſſures us it is a common caſe, and none of us need go farther than ourſelves to feel it. Our Lord lets us in to the myſtery of it. The love of God, wonderful as it is, is not to be perceived but in Chriſt; who hath aſſured us, "that no man "can come to him, unleſs his heavenly "Father draw him;" or, in other words, "that no man can believe in him, unleſs it "be given him of the Father." And the reaſon of this he likewiſe gives, viz. that none of the children of Adam have life in themſelves, but are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, until they are quickened with that new life which is lodged in his hands. There is hardly any thing that the men of the world, even the wiſeſt of them, are more loath to believe: but what our Lord told Nicodemus, though it ſeemed an inconceiveable thing to him, yet is moſt certainly true, "That unleſs a man be born again, he "can by no means enter into the king-"dom of heaven;" and that is the ſame with obtaining eternal life; which cannot be

be but by entering the child of Adam into the ſpiritual and eternal world.

That there is a ſpiritual and eternal world, completely provided for the ſubſiſtence and entertainment of created ſpirits, its natural inhabitants, is as certain, as that there is a God, and ſuch beings as created ſpirits. But of that world we never had known, nor yet can know any thing, with tolerable certainty, but by report, and the teſtimony of ſuch as are acquainted with it. We have no correſpondence with any of the created inhabitants, and can have no information but from him who has given us hopes of being admitted there. He has given information ſo far as we are capable of receiving it; but that can be no further than human language has words to expreſs, or than our world hath images to convey, ſome notion of theſe unſeen things: for direct ideas we neither have, nor can have, of any of thoſe things which cannot be imaged. From what falls under our obſervation in the ſenſible and rational world, all our deſcriptive terms are, and muſt be taken; and all the knowledge we can receive of that unſeen world, muſt ſubſiſt in pure analogy, and the reſemblance

blance which this of ours bears to it. And in this view we are directed to conſider it as a deſigned figure, or ſenſible repreſentation, of eternal and unſeen things.

We can ſay nothing about life or being farther than we can gather from what we enjoy of them; but the things themſelves are as much myſtery to us as creation out of nothing. We may know how we came into this world, and enter upon life; how we are ſupported and maintained in the poſſeſſion of it; and how we are fitted and qualified, by the powers belonging to it, for the buſineſs and enjoyments of life: and that is all we have any concern with; the giving and diſpoſal of life are entirely in the hand of the creator.

The life we now enjoy was originally lodged in the hands of our firſt father, and from him derived down to all his poſterity in the courſe of what we call *ordinary generation*, the only method of entrance into this world. In this way all the powers neceſſary for living, for taking in the proper food and nouriſhment for ſupporting life, and raiſing the man to his proper degree of ſtature, and ſtrength of body or mind, are conveyed. But all de-

pends on the connection eſtabliſhed between us, and the material ſyſtem in which we ſubſiſt; the heat and light of the ſun, and the air we conſtantly breathe in. When this connection is broken, though there is not any particle loſt, life is at an end; the man dies; and the curious bodily machinery is crumbled into its original duſt.

No body will imagine that ſpirits can be ſupported in life by the ſame means that our bodies are; but it would at once be a very groſs and dangerous miſtake, to think that life is eſſential to them; or, which is the ſame thing, that they have life in themſelves. There is a ſpiritual ſyſtem as well as a material one, and it is in dependence on, and connection with, that ſyſtem, that ſpirits live. *There*, we are told, is ſpirit anſwering our material air; and in the original languages there is but one word for both. *There* alſo is the light of life, and that ſpiritual warmth and heat in which life conſiſts; all of them as neceſſary for ſupporting the life of a ſpirit, as the material light and air are for ſupporting the natural life. Whenever this connection is broken, the ſpirit muſt die; that is, though the ſubſtance of it continues the ſame, yet it muſt be incapable of exerting

exerting the proper functions of the ſpiritual life; or, to ſay the thing in the moſt proper terms human language affords, it cannot live upon God, and take in the pleaſures and gratifications, the comforts and joys, which are to be found in him, who is the very life, and, we may ſay, the only ſubſtance of the ſpiritual and eternal world.

That this is the very ſtate in which all the children of Adam are naturally found, none, I think, needs to be told. They who doubt of it, need only try what they can make of God, of the happineſs, pleaſure, and joy, which are certainly to be found in beholding the glory of God, and in the ſenſe of his friendſhip and love; and they will find themſelves abſolute ſtrangers to that way of living. Sin made the ſeparation between the creator and our firſt father; and the inſurmountable diſtance has been continued and kept up by the ſame unhappy means. In his great goodneſs he has provided a way for deſtroying ſin, and ſaving the ſinner. The fulneſs of life is lodged in Jeſus Chriſt, who is the head of mankind in the ſpiritual and eternal world, even as the firſt Adam was in this; and the ſpiritual life muſt be

conveyed from him in a manner ſomething analogous to the conveyance of this natural one. And thence ariſes the name of *regeneration* and *the new birth*, the way in which the Apoſtle ſaith mankind are ſaved: Tit. iii. 5. 6. "Not by works of righ-" teouſneſs which we have done, but ac-" cording to his mercy he ſaved us, by the " waſhing of regeneration, and renewing " of the Spirit; which God, in his love " and kindneſs to man, ſheds or pours " out abundantly through Jeſus Chriſt the " Saviour."

How the conveyance of life is made, either in the one birth or the other, is no more poſſible to be apprehended, than how life was given to the firſt man. In the natural birth into this external world, however the body may be formed by the mediation of material mechaniſm, it is, I believe, allowed by every body, that there is an interpoſal of divine power equivalent at leaſt to that by which being was firſt given to all things. The ſecond birth, by which the children of Adam are born again, into the ſpiritual world, we find deſcribed in the ſame terms: It is ſaid to be a *new creation*, the *workmanſhip* of God; and the effect of it is ſtyled *a new creature*.

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I know not why men ſhould have been ſo loath to admit the native and proper ſenſe of theſe terms, and ſo anxious to have them ranked in the claſs of ſtrained and high-ſounding metaphors, unleſs it be, that they cannot reconcile proper creation, or the interpoſal of creating power, with their darling plan of moral government: and they are indeed inconſiſtent; for the Apoſtle expreſsly oppoſes ſaving by works of righteouſneſs, to ſaving by regeneration and the renewing of the Spirit. And how can they be ſaid to be born of God, and born of the Spirit, as the only way by which ſinners can be entered into the ſpiritual and eternal world, if there is not an exertion of the ſame power which entered them into the material world, by the firſt, and what we call *the natural birth?*

But the evidence does not ſtand ſingly on the words and terms which perfect wiſdom has choſen, though that ought to carry full conviction; the very nature of the thing requires ſuch an interpoſal of divine power. The two worlds into which the firſt and ſecond birth enters men, are eſſentially different, even as different as God and the creature; conſequently, the way

way of living, and of courſe the principle we call *life*, which fits and qualifies the creature for either ſtation and way of living, muſt be equally different. The life conveyed from the firſt man enters us into this preſent world, and qualifies us for the way of living here, viz. living upon the creature: A life which the curſe of God reſts upon, and will certainly deſtroy; and a life which is ſo far from fitting us for living as ſpirits do, living on God as children do on their father, that it is utterly inconſiſtent with it, inſomuch that no man can enter upon this new life, but by crucifying, mortifying, and renouncing the former: "Fleſh "and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of "God." The love of a preſent life and of a preſent world, the conſtituent principle of the child of Adam; and the love of God, the conſtituent principle of the new creature; are utterly inconſiſtent, and deſtroy one another.

That theſe are reſpectively the conſtituent principles of the two lives conveyed to us by the firſt and ſecond birth, the experience of many thouſand years, even as many as the world has ſtood, abundantly proves. The Spirit of God conveyed through Jeſus Chriſt produces the one, the

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ſpirit of the world, indeed the ſpirit which works in the children of diſobedience, influences the other. Nature can riſe no higher than to take in the report of the life which the ſpirit of Chriſt gives, and to balance it by the powers of reaſon: and tho' reaſon will give its verdict on Chriſt's ſide; yet it has not ſufficient ſtrength to deſtroy the love of the world, and the appetites and paſſions raiſed and employed under it. The ſtrong man armed will keep the houſe, until a ſtronger than he comes, takes away his armour, caſts out his ſtuff, and fits it up for himſelf. And the power that is neceſſary for that purpoſe, or ſo much as to bring a child of Adam to believe in Chriſt, and of courſe to live by him, muſt be the ſame, as the Apoſtle tells us, that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead.

But, ſay our wiſe men, there can be no new creation, nor new birth here, but only a metaphorical one; for there is no new ſubſtance created, nor any new faculties given, only the old ones are refined, and directed to their proper objects. Should we ſee one of thoſe animals we are beſt acquainted with, taken from the plough or the paſture, transformed into

a man, and endued with a capacity for entering into all the refinements of metaphyſical, and the moſt abſtruſe parts of natural philoſophy, we would readily ſay there was a new creation: and yet, if Jeſus Chriſt and his apoſtles do not deceive us, the natural or animal man, the mere child of Adam, who is at his higheſt only a living ſoul, is really as incapable of living as ſpirits do, until he is transformed in the ſpirit of his mind by the Spirit of life conveyed by Jeſus Chriſt the creator. By what falls under our ſenſes in the animal or vegetable creation, we are able to diſtinguiſh one ſpecies from another, and to obſerve whatever ſupernatural changes may be made in any of them. But ſpirits are not the objects of our bodily ſenſes; we know nothing of their ſubſtance, and but little of their properties and powers; and from the ſuperficial knowledge we have of their nature, are apt to imagine they are all of one kind: though, for any thing we know, they may be as different from one another, according to the ſeveral purpoſes they are deſigned to anſwer, as the ſeveral kinds of animals are. Human ſouls are evidently a very low, if not the loweſt claſs of all,

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deſigned to act not only in conjunction with, but in abſolute dependence on, groſs material bodies. The perceptive powers, on which all our knowledge is founded, extend no further than material objects, and what we are conſcious of in ourſelves, and a preſumption that other men are like us. Our active powers are in the ſame manner very limited. The whole of the ſpiritual world lies ſo far beyond our reach, that we can make nothing of it, until he who breathed or inſpired the breath or ſpirit of life into the firſt man, inſpires or conveys the ſpirit and life of Chriſt, and either gives new powers and faculties, or enlarges and new-moulds the old ones, in a ſuitableneſs unto the place and ſtation they are advanced to in Chriſt, ſo as to enable them to perceive ſpiritual objects, to judge of their worth and excellency, and to find their pleaſure, happineſs, and joy, in God, through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Could we make out a deſcription of this ſame ſpiritual world into which the children of Adam are entered by the new birth, of the way of living there, the

buſineſs and employments of the inhabitants, their enjoyments and happineſs in the all-ſufficiency of Jehovah, it would appear with convincing evidence, that there is in every reſpect as proper creation in the new birth as in the old. But this is as impoſſible as it is to give a detail of the fulneſs and all-ſufficiency of that God who is all in all there, yea, the very ſubſtance of that world, and of the happineſs that thoſe who are entered there muſt find in him who is love, and appears in that amiable character to all the inhabitants; for they are all his children through Jeſus Chriſt.

This the Apoſtle John celebrates, as at once the ſtrongeſt evidence, and the moſt endearing commendation of the love of God, 1 John iii. 1. And well he might. It was much that the great proprietor and ſovereign of heaven and earth ſhould condeſcend to pardon ſinners, rebels, enemies; it was more, that he ſhould make them a free gift of eternal life in his own bleſſed Son, and thereby juſtify them from all things, from which it was impoſſible for them to be juſtified by any law that could be given, or any meaſures of moral government; but the endearing manner in which

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the gift is conveyed crowns all: "Behold! "what manner of love the Father hath "beſtowed on us, that we ſhould be cal- "led the ſons of God?" The higheſt ti- tle, the neareſt and moſt endearing rela- tion, and at the ſame time the happieſt; for the Apoſtle's concluſion is out of diſ- pute, "If children, then heirs; heirs of "God, and joint heirs with Chriſt."

Men may adopt ſtrangers into their fa- mily; they can give the rank, and a right to the inheritance of the family: but they cannot give them the ſpirit of children; they muſt take them as they find them. But it does not become him who is perfect in underſtanding and wiſdom to adopt at random. When he confers the relation and rights, he at the ſame time gives them the ſpirit of children, and forms them into a meetneſs for the dignity of that ſtation, and a capacity of enjoying the inheritance: "For we know, when he the bleſſed and "glorious Son of God ſhall appear, we "ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him "as he is." To be made like the bleſſed, the glorious Son of God! who is "the "brightneſs or ſhine of the Father's glory, "and the expreſs image of his perſon," is

ſurely to be made as like God as it is poſſible for a creature to be. And muſt not theſe be an order or ſpecies of beings very different from the natural children of Adam, who bear only the image of that earthly man; living ſouls, or rather living bodies, and no more; or, as the Apoſtle deſcribes them, "ſenſual, having not the Spirit."

Thus there is made, and thus only can be made, an effectual proviſion againſt a difficulty which has very juſtly puzzled the wiſeſt moral governors; when it is fit to pardon, and when to puniſh, offenders and criminals. It is not enough to ſay, as many who reckon themſelves very wiſe take upon them to ſay, that the penitent ought to be pardoned, and the impenitent puniſhed. But what wiſdom can determine with any certainty who are truly penitent? and yet more, what ſecurity can be had of ſuch a mutable and weak being as man, that he ſhall not on ſome new temptation fall into the ſame crimes? An experiment was made on the moſt perfect man that ever was; and after his ſhameful failure, who of his poſterity could be fit to be truſted? There was indeed one, and only one; but he had the fulneſs of the Divine Spirit dwelling in him;

him; and nothing can ſecure the creature but the ſame Spirit.

21. *The Spirit, and Inſpiration.*

THE Apoſtle has ſaid ſo expreſsly, "that if any man has not the Spi-"rit of Chriſt, he is none of his," that none who know any thing of Chriſt dare venture to deny it: nor indeed will any doubt of it, but ſuch as flatter themſelves they can do well enough without him; or at leaſt that they need no more but to have the terms of life propoſed to them, a law which ſhall give life, by the obſervance of which they are to work out their own ſalvation. But, unhappily for them, the Apoſtle knew of no ſuch law; for he tells us very expreſsly, there was no ſuch law exiſting in his time; and in his time the way of life was finally adjuſted and ſettled. And hence it appears certain, that if there is any law now among men which pretends to convey life to the obſervers of it, or gives them any hope in that way, it can be none of God's making. He has left no poſſible way to e-

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ternal life, but the free ſovereign gift he has made of it in his Son; nor any other way of conveying life, but by his Spirit.

The record we have in our hands of God's ways with man is, from the beginning to the end of it, ſo full of the ſame Spirit, that there is no getting rid of the term, without abſolutely rejecting the whole record. But the word happens to be uſed there, and yet more in common language, in very different ſenſes, which has given occaſion to very different conſtructions of words which ſeem to be in themſelves very plain; and thence occaſion has been taken to explain away the meaning of ſeveral propoſitions, which one ſhould think could not be miſtaken.

The term *ſpirit*, in its firſt and native ſenſe, denotes a ſubſtance, of a nature altogether, and almoſt in every reſpect, different from matter; and is applied primarily to the firſt being, the Father of ſpirits, as the Apoſtle very emphatically calls him who has life in himſelf, and is the fountain of life to all created ſpirits, thoſe we call *angels*, and the ſouls of men. Hence, by a very natural tranſition, the ſpirit of man

man is uſed to denote the temper and diſpoſition by which all one's actions, and the whole conduct of life, are regulated and directed; the inward ſentiment, the ſpring and director of them all; and very often is applied to the goſpel, in oppoſition to the letter of Moſes's law, as that which gives it all its worth and value, and wherein its life and power conſiſts.

Could we attain any ſatisfying notion of that kind of beings which merit the name of ſpirits, we would be at no loſs to ſee the reaſon of the apparently different applications of that term to ſubjects ſo greatly different. Philoſophers, and philoſophical divines, have laboured, with great earneſtneſs, to make out what they call the idea of a ſpirit: and, to ſay the thing as it is, they might with as much proſpect of ſucceſs have attempted to make an image of it. Several have flattered themſelves, that they had as diſtinct, and ſome ſay even more diſtinct, ideas of ſpirit, than we have of matter: but when they come to explain themſelves, it amounts to no more than that we have no idea of either, but only of ſome properties and powers belonging to them, by which the unknown

unknown ſubſtances are diſtinguiſhed from one-another. How far theſe refinings are conſiſtent with the common ſenſe and experience of the world, I do not determine: but this I muſt ſay, that theſe ſubtile metaphyſics have made no manner of addition to uſeful knowledge; but, on the contrary, have opened up a fund of ſcepticiſm, of which we have no way to relieve ourſelves, but by returning to common ſenſe, and what lies within the compaſs of experience and obſervation.

Before any of thoſe cant terms which learned foppery has introduced, were known, the world was, and the bulk of mankind, which never heard of them, ſtill are, poſſeſſed of a diſtinction between matter and ſpirit, which anſwers all the purpoſes of life every jot as well; and ſo much better, as, being founded on plain obſervation, it is equally intelligible to the learned and unlearned. Thoſe parts of the univerſe which are perceived to be dead and inactive, incapable of ſo much as moving themſelves, they call *matter;* and whatever poſſeſſeth, or appears to poſſeſs, active powers, a capacity of moving themſelves, or putting other things

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in motion, or, in other words, a capacity of producing thought or motion, is called *ſpirit*. And I ſtrongly ſuſpect, all the learned labours of philoſophers put together, will never, at leaſt in this world, be able to carry it farther.

In this view, it will eaſily appear how the term *ſpirit* is very properly uſed in all the above caſes: And the preciſe application of it (when it denotes a particular kind of being, and when it is deſigned to expreſs the executive and active powers of any agent) will not be found hard to be adjuſted by an honeſt unbiaſſed mind. In the preſent caſe, it will not be difficult to diſcover when the principal agent is meant, and when the under-agent, or inſtrument by which the effect is produced, is to be underſtood by that term. The fountain and fulneſs of life lies in God: It is conveyed through Jeſus Chriſt, by whom all things were and are created: The grant lies in the goſpel, the only way we come either to the knowledge, or title to the poſſeſſion, of it: but it is the Spirit, promiſcuouſly called the Spirit of God and of Chriſt, which makes the conveyance effectual, or rather in which the life of our ſpirits lies.

That the ſpiritual or Chriſtian life lies in the abiding and indwelling of this ſame promiſed Spirit, may not, nor can be refuſed by any who acknowledge the New-Teſtament writings. All true Chriſtians are born of this Spirit; and by being thus born, our Lord ſays they are ſpirit. And ſurely that which is born of the Spirit muſt be different from the Spirit of which it is born; and therefore this Spirit muſt be an agent as different from that divine ſtate and temper of mind by which the new creature is diſtinguiſhed from the old, as the cauſe is from the effect.

It is the ſame Spirit which was given to dwell in the man Jeſus, and by being given without meaſure, diſtinguiſhed him from, and exalted him infinitely above, all the reſt of mankind; the ſame Spirit which he promiſed to ſend upon his diſciples when he was about to leave them, and which ſhould ſupply his abſence greatly more to their advantage than his ſenſible preſence; that Spirit which ſhould lead them into all truth, bring all things to their remembrance, take his things, (and all that the Father has, he ſays, is his), and ſhew them

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to them, ſhould help all their infirmities, and be an abſolute and complete Comforter to them.

By the image that is given us of this new birth in the firſt natural one, and the analogy or reſemblance held forth to us in that expreſſion, we are naturally led to conceive, that this Spirit of life anſwers the ſame purpoſe in the pure ſpiritual life, that the breath of life does in the imperfect animal one, viz. that by this there is eſtabliſhed a connection with, and dependence on, the ſpiritual ſyſtem, for ſpiritual ſubſiſtence and life, even as we are connected with the material one by the air we breathe in, and without which we can by no means ſubſiſt. And further, as this air in which we breathe, is not ſo properly an effect, as the very ſubſtance of the material ſyſtem; ſo muſt this Spirit be in the ſpiritual one; that is, in the very Spirit of God in Jeſus Chriſt, we live, move, and have our being; which cannot be at all conceived or apprehended, but by a *Trinity* in the Divine Unity, which we have deſigned and diſtinguiſhed by the names of *Father*, *the Word* or *Son*, and *Eternal Spirit*, the ſame divine ſubſtance in

all, diſtinguiſhed in a manner far above human, and very probably above all created apprehenſion, ſubſiſting and acting in and by one another.

How this ſame Spirit is conveyed and communicated by Jeſus Chriſt to his diſciples and followers, we can no more apprehend, than how he made the world, and breathed the breath or ſpirit of life into the firſt man. We can obſerve what is done, the effects and conſequences of this unſpeakable gift; and that is enough for us. We are told by our Lord himſelf, who perfectly underſtood the affair, "that "as the living Father ſent him, and he "lives by the Father; ſo all that have "heard and learned of the Father, and "come to him, ſhall live by him;" that by this one Spirit they are united to him in the neareſt and moſt intimate manner, and are one ſpirit with him; that his life is communicated to them ſo really, and without any figure, that in ſtrict propriety of ſpeech, it is not they, but Chriſt who lives in them: he is their life, and with him that life is hid with God; and becauſe he lives, they ſhall live alſo.

The native conſequence of this conveyance

ance of the Spirit of life, and of the new life thus communicated to them, is a new way of living: for they who have the Spirit and life of Chriſt, live in this Spirit, and walk in this Spirit; that is, they follow Jeſus, they live and walk as he did; for if there is the ſame ſpirit, there muſt be the ſame mind, to ſee things in the ſame light, and accordingly to form the ſame judgement of them, and conſequently to eſteem and deſpiſe, to love and hate, juſt as he did. This is the new heart and new ſpirit, the divine nature the Apoſtle ſays they are made partakers of: the law of love is written in their heart; and the Apoſtle John aſſures us, "that he that dwelleth in love, "dwelleth in God, and God in him; for "God is love."

The wiſe men of the world will ſay, as Nicodemus did, "How can theſe things "be?" It muſt be ſo; for the Apoſtle has told us, "That the natural man," one who is merely a child of Adam, "receiveth not "the things of the Spirit of God; neither "can he know them, becauſe they are "ſpiritually diſcerned." And indeed the very nature of the thing declares it. The way of the Spirit cannot be known but by feeling the powerful effects of it. And

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theſe none can either feel or perceive, but ſuch as are alive; as they, and they only, are who believe. They have the witneſs in themſelves, but cannot ſhow it to thoſe who want the ſpiritual diſcerning, any more than one who has the moſt perfect uſe of his eyes can ſhow the light of the ſun to a blind man. In both caſes, it is only by doing what the other cannot, that they can make them believe there is any ſuch thing. In many inſtances, the old prophets ſhowed the Spirit and power of the true God; but never did the Spirit appear ſo illuſtriouſly as in his deſcent upon the diſciples after their maſter's aſcenſion. By what was then done upon them, we ſee what the Spirit can do, and need have no doubt of his anſwering every purpoſe he is promiſed for.

I hinted before the purpoſes on which our Lord promiſed to his diſciples to ſend the Holy Spirit the Comforter: the ſum of the whole is, "That he ſhould teach "them all things."

None will be ſo fooliſh as to imagine, that the promiſe imported their being made omniſcient, any more than the Spirit's being promiſed to "lead them unto all truth" did. There are many things which it is impoſſible

impoſſible for man, or any creature, to know; many more which he has no occaſion for the knowledge of; and many which it might be hurtful to him to know; as indeed all uſeleſs knowledge muſt be hurtful, as it diverts the attention from minding and improving what is moſt neceſſary. But this we may be very ſure of, that the gift of the Spirit carries in it all that we need: and how the Spirit, or, which in this caſe is the ſame thing, how the almighty power of the creator, effects this, is none of our buſineſs to know, nor could the knowledge of it anſwer any good purpoſe to any of mankind.

But vain man will be wiſe: and if we will needs be diving into a ſecret which none but God is capable of underſtanding, it would be proper to begin ſomewhat lower, and, we may ſay, nearer home. How came we to be provided with the perceptive powers we find ourſelves in poſſeſſion of, and every particular ſenſe ſo exactly ſuited to its object? It will be ſaid, all this was adjuſted by the perfect wiſdom and underſtanding of the creator. But it is evident this is no anſwer to the queſtion, and that we are ſtill left entirely in the

the dark how the thing was effected by this ſame divine wiſdom and almighty power.

If we look further into ourſelves, the ſtate and furniture of our minds, and what we call *mental powers*, which go by the general name of *reaſon* and *underſtanding*, it will readily be allowed by all who acknowledge a creator, that all this is his work. But the profoundeſt philoſopher has never been able to ſay how it is done, any further than Moſes has told us, that he breathed or inſpired into man the breath or ſpirit of life: and, I believe, it is from this that *inſpiration* is become a common word in all or moſt languages, and the only term they have for expreſſing the divine communications of peculiar gifts to men. It is, I believe, commonly reſtricted to the revelation of the divine mind and will; but then we have no other word left for the conveyance of life, and all the powers of life. But, however we apply the term, we can make no more of it, than that there is ſomething done by the creator which we call by that name, and which produces real and ſenſible effects; and when it is thus underſtood, it will appear to be no ſuch extraordinary thing as

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it is commonly thought to be; and that, indeed, every man who has a ſpirit in him, is really more or leſs inſpired.

Thoſe writers who underſtood the affair beſt, being themſelves inſpired in what is thought to be the higheſt ſenſe, expreſs it by God's giving another ſpirit, and the Spirit of God coming upon one, and conveying ſuch peculiar gifts, or making ſuch improvements or alterations as he ſees proper: and they extend it far; to mechanical ſkill, as in the caſe of Bezaliel and Aholiab; to wiſdom and underſtanding, as in Solomon and others. He gave Saul another ſpirit; his ſpirit was taken from him, and an evil ſpirit from the Lord troubled him. The different meaſures of this gift are to be ſeen in the ordinary and extraordinary prophets under the old diſpenſation; and by the whole hiſtory, it appears, that the ſpirit of man is abſolutely in the creator's hand, to give or take away what gifts and endowments he pleaſes; that is, to give or with-hold his Spirit.

But never was this matter ſet in ſo clear a light as in the caſe of the twelve diſciples of Jeſus. That there might be no room left for the ſlighteſt ſurmiſes, and

that all men might ſee that the whole was an effect of immediate divine power, he choſe his diſciples out of the loweſt and moſt contemptible claſs which was to be found in that nation, which was very far from being reſpectable in the eye of the world: the moſt noted of them were poor illiterate fiſhermen of Galilee. During the time of their maſter's continuance with them on earth, they had ſuch a meaſure of the Spirit as raiſed them not only greatly above what they formerly were, but even above the wiſeſt and moſt learned men of that nation; and the maſters of Iſrael, without doubt, knew more of God than all the world beſides. But, to the time of their maſter's reſurrection, and aſcenſion to heaven, they continued under ſo much weakneſs and ignorance of the moſt neceſſary truths, that after all the pains he had taken in teaching and inſtructing them, they could not believe his reſurrection, until they were forced to it by ſenſible evidence.

But when the promiſe he had made them came to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecoſt, then it appeared to what aſtoniſhing height, and how near perfection, the

the Spirit could raiſe the loweſt of mankind. The gift of tongues was the moſt obvious and ſtriking effect, becauſe it was utterly inconceiveable how ignorant unlearned men could in a moment acquire the underſtanding of all languages then in being. The power that was given them of healing diſeaſes without any ſenſible means, was not to be accounted for but by the power of God being preſent with them. But what was leaſt obvious to ſenſe, was by far the greateſt miracle; the aſtoniſhing meaſures of knowledge and underſtanding in the moſt ſecret myſteries of the kingdom of God; and, what is yet more, the forming their hearts, their ſentiments, affections, and paſſions, upon theſe views; ſo that the world, with all its allurements and terrors, was treated with the utmoſt contempt, and could not make the leaſt impreſſion on their reſolution and behaviour. The Apoſtle ſays it ſtrongly; the world was *crucified*, made a dead thing, to them, and they were dead to the world.

This aſtoniſhing fact, in all the circumſtances and conſequences of it, ſtands ſo diſtinctly recorded, that we need not enter upon particulars; and is ſo fully atteſted,

that we cannot avoid believing it, without reſolving to believe nothing. It may perhaps be ſaid, This was an extraordinary caſe, for anſwering an extraordinary occaſion; but what is that to ordinary Chriſtians in ordinary caſes? The meaſure of that inſpiration, or effuſion of the Spirit, was indeed extraordinary, and attended with ſenſible circumſtances ſuited to the occaſion; but the gift itſelf was by no means confined to the apoſtles in the truth and reality of it. So far from it, that all who believed in Chriſt had the Holy Spirit given, even in a ſenſible manner, by the laying on of the hands of the apoſtles; inſomuch that the Apoſtle ſays expreſsly, "If any man have not the Spirit "of Chriſt, he is none of his." This we find taken for granted in all the apoſtolical writings; inſomuch that the goſpel they preached is called *the miniſtration of the Spirit;* and unto this ſame Spirit we find all the fruits and effects of the goſpel attributed. And that we may not imagine this was only a temporary diſpenſation, the whole ſtands on the indiſpenſable promiſe of giving a new heart, and a new ſpirit, and writing God's law there, the ſubſtance of that covenant or grant of which Chriſt

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is the mediator and ſurety. And ſo late as the time when the Apoſtle John wrote his epiſtles, it was the common privilege of Chriſtians to have an *unction* or anointing from the Holy One, by which they were taught all things; and ſo eſſential to Chriſtianity, that no man could ſay Jeſus was the Lord, but by this Spirit.

By this we may be directed what to think of the commonly-received maxim, that ſince the finiſhing the New-Teſtament writings, inſpiration has ceaſed; and all pretenſions to it are branded with the odious title of *enthuſiaſm*; a cant word, which has no determined meaning as now uſed; and in the language from which it is taken, was deemed to be the ſame with inſpiration, or being actuated by a Divine Spirit. If the meaning of the maxim is only, that there is no revelation of new truths, or terms of acceptance with God, which are not contained in theſe writings, it is certainly true. But whether the impreſſing theſe truths on the minds and conſciences of men, and forming their hearts and ſentiments upon them, is not as real inſpiration, as the original revelation to thoſe who

who thus delivered them down to us, is another queſtion, or rather ought not to be queſtioned or doubted: and indeed there never was, nor ever will be, a real Chriſtian, who is not as really inſpired with the truths of the goſpel as the apoſtles themſelves were, and by the ſame Spirit too, though in a different manner and degree, which accordingly produces the ſame effects proportionally.

It may perhaps contribute ſomething towards our forming ſome conception of this truly myſterious affair, which, in itſelf, is, and muſt be, abſolutely incomprehenſible, if we conſider attentively the ſeveral caſes recorded in the hiſtory of the goſpel, of perſons poſſeſſed by other ſpirits, evil ones, or devils. We are plainly enough told, that theſe unhappy creatures, though moſt of them had intervals, when they might be ſaid to be themſelves, yet were under the power of theſe ſpirits, to act in them and by them; that it was not ſo properly they who acted, as the ſpirit that poſſeſſed them. One damſel we find was poſſeſſed with a ſpirit of divination; and as many of theſe demoniacs were endued with bodily ſtrength and force greatly above human,

human, in her we have a ſpecimen of as unnatural ſtrength of mind. Jeſus and his diſciples ſignalized themſelves by diſlodging theſe uſurping demons, and thereby ſhowing their ſuperiority and abſolute authority over them; which leaves no room to doubt, that his Spirit can poſſeſs the bodies, and eſpecially the ſpirits of mankind, in as abſolute a manner, as to make them act, and even think, as he pleaſes.

The belief of this was ſo ſtrong among all the Heathen nations, that on it the whole buſineſs of oracles was founded; which made ſo much noiſe among the Greeks and Romans, that it would have been deemed blaſphemy to deny, and great profaneneſs even to doubt of the divine inſpiration of the miniſters of the gods, as they were reckoned on theſe occaſions; and who, on this account, had the name of *enthuſiaſts*, as being under a divine enthuſiaſm or poſſeſſion. Nay, the wiſeſt of them carried it yet further, even into common life, and appear to have been fully perſuaded, that no great or extraordinary action was ever either undertaken or accompliſhed, without ſome degree of this enthuſiaſm.

Our

Our wiſer moderns, being loath, as it would ſeem, to be ſo much indebted to God, as deliverance from the ſpirit which the Apoſtle ſays works effectually in the children of diſobedience, and leads them captive at his will, would make them, have found a way of explaining all the effects of ſpirits, whether good or bad, on mankind, by a ſyſtem merely mechanical. Theſe effects, by tacking a new ſenſe to the old word, they call by the diſgraceful term of *enthuſiaſm*; and for all who have any regard to the influence of ſpirits, good or bad, they have coined two other terms of diſgrace, to which no mortal can affix a meaning, viz. *Fanatics*, and *Myſtics*. Feſtus dealt more honeſtly with the Apoſtle Paul: he thought him mad, and told him ſo; but in the gentleſt manner that ſuch an imputation could be conveyed, "Paul, thou art beſide thyſelf: *much* "*learning* doth make thee mad." In the preſent ſtate of human nature, no man can be quite ſecure againſt miſtakes, even where the conſtitution is beſt and ſoundeſt. But the ſmalleſt diſorder in the animal ſyſtem affects the intellectual and rational powers; and when carried to a certain

certain height, entirely perverts and overturns them. This we call *madneſs*. But there are as many different degrees of it, as there are of bodily diſorders which occaſion it: and ſomething there muſt be of this kind where-ever men are very confident and warm, without proper evidence and rational grounds. But however that may be the caſe of ſuch as are under the influence of evil ſpirits, which perhaps is more common than any of us are aware of; yet it neither does, nor can be the caſe, of thoſe who are poſſeſſed by the Spirit of God, and under the divine influence and leading. Every ſtep in their way is laid out by perfect wiſdom, and of courſe ſupported by the trueſt and moſt perfect reaſon. Every deviation from it is a piece of folly; and the further they recede, the nearer they approach to the height of madneſs. And when Perfect Wiſdom condeſcends to take the leading and guiding of ſuch as cannot guide themſelves, what name ſhall we give to thoſe who will not follow?

But, ſay the wiſe men of the world, if men are thus poſſeſſed and actuated by the Spirit, what becomes of human liberty? and if that is gone, there can be no ſuch

thing as moral virtue; no human actions either juſtly rewardable or puniſhable, and the whole ſyſtem of righteous moral government is ſubverted or deſtroyed.

I have no mind to enter into the intricacies of the diſputes that have been raiſed on the ſubject of human liberty, which, if ever that affair comes to be well underſtood, I am ſatisfied the difference of the ſeveral contending parties will be found to lie more in words and terms than in the thing itſelf. All are agreed, that men, the freeſt of them, are neceſſarily determined by what appears the ſtrongeſt motive; that is, ſuch as makes the ſtrongeſt impreſſion on the mind of the agent, or, which is the ſame thing, excites the ſtrongeſt affections and paſſions, the immediate makers or determiners of what is called the *will*, and perhaps that very thing itſelf. Could any agent be ſuppoſed ſo perfect as never to be miſtaken or miſled by falſe appearances, every motive would have its juſt weight, neither more nor leſs; and the whole conduct of ſuch an agent would be perfectly regular, and ſuch as it ought to be: and if that is not moral virtue, I know not what is. By what

what means the creature comes to be thus enlightened or determined, can make no alteration in the nature of his actions. When all is ſaid that can be ſaid for giving the creature the honour of being maſter of his own actions, when it comes to be traced to its riſe and original, it will appear, that it is "by the grace of God that "we are what we are." Thoſe who are poſſeſſed and led by the Spirit of God, are no more treated like ſtocks or ſtones, than the wiſeſt philoſopher treats himſelf; only with this advantage, that they are more directly taught of God, and better ſecured againſt being impoſed on by falſe appearances, and of courſe more ſteadily and ſtrictly virtuous.

On this view, and that which the goſpel of Chriſt gives, it is of no moment whether human actions are rewardable or not. That is an extrinſical circumſtance, which does not alter the nature of the actions as they are in themſelves, and abſtracting from the motives on which they proceed. He muſt know very little of himſelf, I may ſay nothing, who imagines that he can ever requite his creator for the benefits he has received; and with what

face then can he expect to be rewarded, even on the impoſſible ſuppoſition of his having done all that he ought to have done? The plan of moral government is no other than a plan of man's contriving, under the influence of a ſpirit which certainly is not of God, by this ſure token, that it lies directly contrary to his declared mind. By the free gift he has made of eternal life in his ever-bleſſed Son, he has given all the reward man is capable of receiving; and they who do not treat him as a liar, but believe his faithful word, receive the earneſt of the Spirit, the principle of this life: and thoſe who will not have it by gift, unleſs they can have the honour of deſerving it, will in the end find themſelves puniſhed as ſuch inſolence deſerves; and that we are well aſſured is everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and the glory of his power; the natural iſſue of moral government, and the meaſures of juſtice. But it is the happineſs of thoſe who are led by the Spirit to live, (as every creature ſhould do), by the free ſovereign grace of the creator, that they are under no ſuch law: "Sin ſhall not have dominion over them;

"for

" for they are not under law, but under " grace."

22. *Heaven; or, The World of Spirits.*

WHen men attempt to ſpeak upon ſubjects they do not underſtand, it would be ſtrange if they did not ſtumble into abſurdities. There is nothing more real than the exiſtence of ſpirits, and of courſe what may very properly be called *the world of ſpirits*, in contradiſtinction to this material one which we inhabit. But as we have no powers capable of perceiving ſpirits, and indeed can know nothing of them but what we can obſerve about ourſelves, or thoſe we have acceſs to converſe with, we can form no notion of them, nor their way of ſubſiſting and acting, but by an analogy with our world; an analogy ſo remote, and which needs ſo much adjuſting, that it is the hardeſt thing in the world to avoid miſtakes, and even abſurdities of the groſſeſt kind; and would have been abſolutely impoſſible, had it not been for the condeſcenſion our creator has ſhown in the information he has given us

of

of what he alone perfectly knows; and he has given us as much as we need to know, and, one may ſay, as much as we are capable of in our preſent ſtate.

When we have purſued our ſearch into the nature of thoſe beings we call *ſpirits*, our knowledge of them will be found to conſiſt almoſt wholly of negatives; that they are not matter, nor capable of any of thoſe properties that belong to matter. This has been carried ſo far, as becauſe matter cannot ſubſiſt but in ſome place, or without occupying a certain quantity of what is called *ſpace*, ſome very acute philoſophers have thought, that ſpirits, which cannot occupy ſpace as bodies do, could not be ſaid to be any where: and much unintelligible reaſoning has been employed on each ſide, to prove, or diſprove, what no mortal can poſſibly form any diſtinct conception of. The moſt we can make of it is, to conclude, that ſpirits are ſubſiſting where they act, and produce their effects.

That the human ſpirit, which we call *the ſoul of man*, ſubſiſts and acts in and by the body, is hardly poſſible for any one to doubt. But how it ſubſiſts, and how it

acts

acts there, the moſt learned philoſopher knows no more than the meaneſt peaſant. No wonder then that we know nothing of ſuch created ſpirits as we neither have nor can have any ſenſible or perceptible correſpondence with. We have got two words in our language to diſtinguiſh the different abodes of good and bad ſpirits, viz. *Heaven* and *Hell*. Both are deſcribed in the ſacred record, ſo far as we are capable of apprehending them. But a deſcription where the terms are not underſtood, could make us never a jot wiſer; and therefore the indulgent author has ſhadowed it out under ſuch images as we are beſt acquainted with; *heaven*, as a ſtate of perfect happineſs and pleaſure; and *hell*, as the extremity of miſery and torment: and when we are aſſured of this, it is a matter of no moment in what determinate place thoſe who are thus happy or miſerable have their reſidence allotted them. The only purpoſe an inquiry of this nature could anſwer is, to avoid, if poſſible, erroneous or falſe concluſions, which may fill the mind with ſuch prejudices as may in ſome caſes have a very pernicious tendency.

Heaven

Heaven and hell being directly oppoſite with reſpect to the inhabitants, it ſeems reaſonable to conclude, that they ſhould likewiſe be oppoſite with reſpect to ſituation. But as it is impoſſible to know what will be the ſtate of the eternal ſyſtem when the preſent one ſhall paſs away, and all things, even heaven and earth, be made new; our inquiries and deciſions on the preſent ſtate of the world of ſpirits, even though juſt, would anſwer no purpoſe beyond a preſent world, and the ſtate of things as they now are; but may be of great uſe to prevent miſtakes, and being impoſed on by falſe appearances, and the undue influence of this outward ſenſible world; to which our preſent conſtitution is ſo much fitted, and on which we have ſuch an immediate dependence, that it is no wonder numbers of mankind look no further.

But thoſe who know any thing of God the creator, muſt know, that this material ſyſtem is but an under-agent, or rather the inſtrument which he employs in exerting his power for the ſupport of his creatures; and where-ever he directly and immediately exerts that power to the ſenſe

and

and obſervation of the creature, there is *heaven*, in the common ſenſe of that term: and if there is any particular place where he does it more than another, that we naturally imagine is his peculiar reſidence and dwelling-place. But when he fills heaven and earth, what ſhall we pitch on for the place of his throne? as it is, I believe, commonly enough imagined, he ſome where or other keeps his court with all his angels, his miniſters, and ſervants about him, like the kings of this world, from whom this image appears to have taken its riſe.

When he is ſaid to fill heaven and earth, it is evident enough, that heaven muſt be the ſame which Moſes in the hiſtory of the creation tells us God then called by that name; that immenſe inviſible fluid, &c. in which this earth, and all other viſible bodies, are contained. The original name in that language ſignifies both place and placers, an expanſion which places and keeps in their proper place all things in that order the wiſe architect ordained them, to ſtand ſo long as this ſyſtem ſhould continue. And if this is the heavens where God is ſaid to dwell, and to have his

throne, it would follow, that heaven is not ſo very remote, as that there ſhould need an immenſely long journey to arrive at it; nay, that we are locally there already, where God dwells; but want the neceſſary organs and perceptive powers for making the proper advantages of our ſituation, and living as perfect ſpirits do.

But this has been thought a depretiating the Divine Majeſty, who is ſaid to dwell on high; and accordingly we find thoſe who knew beſt how to addreſs him, always looked upward, and lifted up their eyes toward heaven. The Apoſtle Paul ſpeaks of the third heavens as the place where the Deity peculiarly reſides in all the glory of his majeſty: and when Jeſus was ſet down on the right hand of the Father, he is ſaid to be exalted far above all the heavens.

From theſe, and ſuch like expreſſions, many having imagined ſomething like the lower, ſecond, and third ſtories, in our buildings, conſider the groſs atmoſphere, which is ſtretched above this earth, as the loweſt, or firſt heaven: the boundaries of the ſecond are not eaſily adjuſted, but are generally thought to reach to the fixed ſtars: and ſome unknown place beyond theſe, they call the third. Whether it

was

was on this view they were induced to it, I cannot ſay; but ſome have been very poſitive, that the reſidence of the Divine Majeſty is without the bounds of this material ſyſtem, and make it the diſtinguiſhing property of that immenſe being to act at any diſtance where he is not preſent; the only ſalvo that could preſerve this opinion from the imputation of removing God out of the world, commonly called *Atheiſm*.

But however that may be, and whatever extramundane ſpace may be pitched on for this purpoſe, certain it is, that this cannot be what the creator himſelf called *heaven*. It is not conceivable how the ſame name ſhould be employed in the ſame record to ſignify another thing, which has no relation to what he called ſo, and thereby taught us to call ſo. They may ſeem to come nearer the truth who make theſe material heavens an image and ſenſible exhibition of the ſpiritual, and this laſt the proper reſidence of God, who is a ſpirit, and the father of ſpirits. But neither doth this mend the matter much; for theſe ſame ſpiritual heavens muſt either be in the ſame place with the material ones, or

beyond the utmoſt verge of them; that is, no mortal knows where. And the more narrowly circumſtances are laid together, and conſidered, the greater will the abſurdity appear, of attempting to adjuſt the immenſity of that being who poſſeſſes all the fulneſs of being ſo eſſentially, that where-ever any thing exiſts, there he muſt be.

This conſideration, I believe, is what has determined the moſt conſiderate to allow the immenſity of the divine preſence, as well as his being. But ſtill they think themſelves bound to diſtinguiſh between that and his manifeſtative or glorious preſence: and there is ſome reaſon for the diſtinction; for we find himſelf often ſpeaking of hiding and of manifeſting himſelf and his glory: and, in fact, we find, that the moſt part of mankind are ſo far from beholding his glory, that they do not at all perceive his preſence. But whether this may not be more owing to their want of proper faculties and perceptive powers, than to diſtance of any kind, ſhould be carefully conſidered. The ſun ſhines equally through every part of the ſyſtem; but blind men perceive no more of the

glory

glory of his light, than if there was none.

But however this may be, we are ſure he is not far from every one of us; and where-ever he is, there his glory certainly is, whether it is perceived or not by the creature. It may be of uſe to conſider what we often meet with in the books of Moſes, the glory of the Lord appearing in what our tranſlators call *a pillar of fire*, or *light*, and *cloud*, the ſubſtance of the material heavens, exhibited in that ſenſible form; and which demonſtrated, that he was the ſame who inhabited and dwelt in them as their proprietor and lord. We are told likewiſe in the hiſtory of the prophets, of the heavens being opened, and their ſeeing viſions of God. None ſure will be ſo fooliſh as to imagine, that this was like opening the door of a houſe, or particular apartment, that one may ſee what is within. The caſe of Stephen explains it: He ſaw heaven opened, and Jeſus ſtanding at the right hand of God. He was not as the old prophets; or even as Paul when he was wrapt up to the third heaven, but could not ſay whether it was in the body, or out of the body: Stephen was ſtanding before

before the Jewiſh council, and did no more but look ſtedfaſtly up to heaven. Something of the ſame kind happened to the Apoſtle Paul at his converſion: Jeſus appeared to him in a light far exceeding the light of the ſun, which might very properly be called an opening of the heavens; the light of his glory, who dwells in light inacceſſible, breaking through the more groſs and dark parts of that fluid or expanſion, which we are taught to call the heavens. And it is likely enough, that when John Baptiſt ſaw the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God deſcending on Jeſus at his baptiſm, that it was ſomething of the ſame kind.

This perhaps might be improved, to lead us into a juſter and more conſiſtent notion of the third heavens the Apoſtle Paul ſpeaks of; viz. That they are not like the ſtories in Noah's ark, lower, ſecond, and higheſt, in point of place; but the different conſtitution, if we may call it ſo, of the heavens, ſuited to the different conſtitutions of the ſeveral orders of creatures which have their reſidence and abode in that immenſe expanſion. There can be little doubt that this groſs atmoſphere in which we live and

breath

breathe, is the loweſt. We may eaſily conceive the difference there is between this, and that part of the fluid, which is free from the groſs ſteams and exhalations of this earth, or ſuch bodies as are of the ſame kind, where there is nothing but light and air: and as conceivable a difference there muſt be between even that, and pure light, without any mixture of the groſſer particles of air. We need not amuſe ourſelves with gueſſing where this laſt is to be found in the material ſyſtem. It may be ſufficient to ſay, that this is the only part of the ſyſtem which he "who is light, and "in whom is no darkneſs at all," chuſes to reſide immediately in, and by which he manages every part of it, produces every thing that is produced, and all the changes and alterations which are made throughout the ſyſtem, to the utmoſt extent of it. It might be thought extravagant to imagine, that there are different orders and ranks of ſpirits above us: and that as there are many different ſpecies of animals below us, every one of them placed in their proper element and way of living, ſuited to their conſtitution; in the ſame manner, thoſe beings which are above us ſhould have their proper

per place and ſtation ſuiting the purpoſes they are deſigned for. But as the knowledge of theſe things, even if it could be attained, could anſwer little or no purpoſe to us in our preſent ſtate; it would be but idle for us to amuſe ourſelves with gueſſing about it, when we have more buſineſs of moment upon our hands than our ſhort lives can ſerve to accompliſh.

23. *The Way to Eternal Life.* Matth. xix. 16.—21.

IT was a true teſtimony that was given by the Apoſtle concerning Jeſus Chriſt, on a ſingular occaſion, That he was a man approved, or rather authoriſed and atteſted, of God: and indeed he was ſo in the fulleſt and ſtrongeſt manner that can be imagined. And when the whole evidence was completed and laid together, he was declared, manifeſted, to be the Son of God, with ſuch power, that it is not conceivable how it could be reſiſted by any rational being.

This character preſents him unto us, not only as a teacher ſent from God, and whoſe

whoſe every word was to be reſpected as a divine oracle, but as the perfect image of the inviſible Father, exhibiting at once the awful majeſty of almighty power, and the alluring ſweetneſs of ſovereign grace, love, and kindneſs. His hiſtory therefore muſt merit our utmoſt attention: for in every particular of his behaviour, we are inſtructed in what we may expect from God in parallel circumſtances; and there are very few caſes we can be in, if any at all, to which we may not find ſomething parallel in the record we have in our hands.

Among the numerous incidents of this kind, though there may perhaps be ſome that may be thought more encouraging, there are none more inſtructive than that before us; for it carries an authentic reſolution of the important queſtion, How one ſhall come to inherit eternal life?

The young gentleman appears to have been very much in earneſt. We are told he came running, as one afraid of miſſing the opportunity of being inſtructed by ſuch a teacher. He applies to him with great reſpect; and gives him a title, which, on the views he had of him, proved to be

too high; *Good Maſter*. Had he known and believed him to be what he really was, the creator and ſovereign of the univerſe, he had received no rebuke: but as he had no higher notion of him than that of a prophet or teacher ſent of God, he was very juſtly reproved for giving him a title belonging only to God. Some have been thoughtleſs enough to imagine, that our Lord here refuſes that title, as too high for him, and thus renounces all pretenſions to proper Deity. But he does not. He only puts a queſtion to the man, Why he gave him a title which could belong to none but God? And had he known the Son of God ſo well as to be able to anſwer, that he meant to acknowledge him as ſuch, the queſtion had never been put.

But it is the Lord's anſwer to the queſtion we have mainly to conſider; and it merits ſo much more conſideration, that it has been improved by the admirers of moral government, as they call it, to overturn and ſet aſide the whole ſyſtem of ſovereign grace, as the Apoſtle Paul has fully declared and confirmed it, and that with ſuch plainneſs, and ſtrength of evidence, that nothing but rooted prejudice can

can either evade or reſiſt. We may be well aſſured, that our Lord, and his apoſtle, whom he taught and ſent forth with authority to teach and inſtruct the Gentile world, did not, nor poſſibly could, contradict one another in any point; and leaſt of all in a matter of ſuch moment: Nor is there indeed the leaſt ſhadow of inconſiſtency between them.

The manner in which the queſtion was put, very naturally led the infallible teacher to give the anſwer he did. Had he ſimply aſked, How he ſhould inherit eternal life? it is more than probable he would have told him as he did his diſciples, "That he himſelf was the way, the truth, "and the life; and that no man could "come unto the Father but by him." But the poor man, full of the ſpirit of the degenerated diſciples of Moſes, had no doubt but that the inheritance muſt be earned by doing; and all he wanted was, a direction what good thing he ſhould do to ſecure the great point he had in view.

The wiſe Maſter knew the man perfectly, and frames his anſwer upon the principles of perfect truth, but ſo as ſhould

effectually reach conviction to him on his own views. The general anſwer he gives him is a fundamental truth, " If thou wilt " enter into life, keep the command- " ments." The commandments of God, it cannot be doubted, take in all the duties he requires, or the whole mind of God, with reſpect to the method of conveying eternal life to the dead ſinners of mankind; for die they muſt to this world, ere they can live to God. Life of every kind is the creator's gift; and the moſt excellent life muſt be the moſt valuable gift. It was free to him to give it or not as he pleaſed; and with-holding it could be no injury even to an innocent creature. It muſt therefore have been free to him to convey it in what manner he pleaſed; and he has choſen to do it by his Son Jeſus Chriſt. It is then only by believing the gift that we can know any thing of it; and acquieſcing in the way by which he conveys it, is the only mean by which we can come to the enjoyment of it: and hence believing the teſtimony God has given of his Son, or faith in Jeſus Chriſt, is the firſt duty, on which all other duties depend, and become practicable by a ſinner.

This

This ſuggeſts an obſervation of very great moment, That there never was a law given to mankind, until the foundations of every duty were previouſly laid in an act of pure ſovereign grace, free gifts beſtowed, or, which is equal in this caſe, promiſed to be beſtowed in due time. We need ſay nothing of the primæval law given the firſt parents of mankind. They had newly received being and life, with all that could make ſuch a life eaſy and comfortable. When he gave a peculiar law to the Iſraelitiſh nation, he had by his almighty power, exerted in a moſt ſtriking and illuſtrious manner, delivered them from a long and grievous bondage, and was ready to put them in poſſeſſion of the land he had promiſed unto their fathers. The law given to mankind in general was eſtabliſhed on a greater gift, and infinitely better promiſes; even the gift of eternal life, ſecured in the hands of his ever-bleſſed Son, whom he promiſed from the beginning, and in due time ſent to be the ſaviour of the world. When this foundation is overlooked and neglected, not only are the obligations and proper motives to obedience ſet aſide, but the only ſolid principles and foundation on which

which all the duties both of religion and morality can ſtand, are ſet aſide at the ſame time.

This is more than implied in the direction our Lord gave in the paſſage before us, when he concludes with bidding him *come and follow him*; which he makes at leaſt as neceſſary as what he had told him of keeping the commandments; nay, ſo neceſſary, that whatever elſe he might do, the commandments could not be kept at all without this. Nor is this contradicted by what he had ſaid of keeping the commandments. He affirms indeed, that the commandments muſt be kept by every man who propoſes to enter into life; and they muſt be kept too as the all-wiſe lawgiver has laid them. But by the detail he gives here, which is wholly confined to the ſecond table of the law, it is evident he could not mean, that every man who obſerved theſe commandments ſhould enter into life. There are two general heads under which all the particular duties are comprehended, viz. the love of God, and of our neighbour. He mentions only the laſt, in which he knew the gentleman was very defective, and on which

which he deſigned to convict him. He knew the love of the world was lying very deep in his heart, though he flattered himſelf that he had kept all theſe commandments from his youth. He puts him accordingly to the trial, "Go ſell what "thou haſt, and give to the poor, and "thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: and "come and follow me." The poor man could not bear the thoughts of ſuch an exchange; and went away very ſorrowful, becauſe he could not have the heavenly inheritance without parting with the earthly; nor reconcile the love of God, and the love of a preſent world, ſo as they might dwell together in the ſame heart; which our Lord and his apoſtles aſſure us is abſolutely impoſſible. See Matth. vi. 24.; James iv. 4.; 1 John v. 15.

There is another text, Rev. xxii. 14. which has been abuſed to the ſame unhappy purpoſe, "Bleſſed are they that do "his commandments, that they may have "right to the tree of life;" where our tranſlation leads us to imagine, that doing the commandments, gives a *right* to the tree of life; which, we are ſure, is not to be had but by a ſovereign free gift. To

rectify

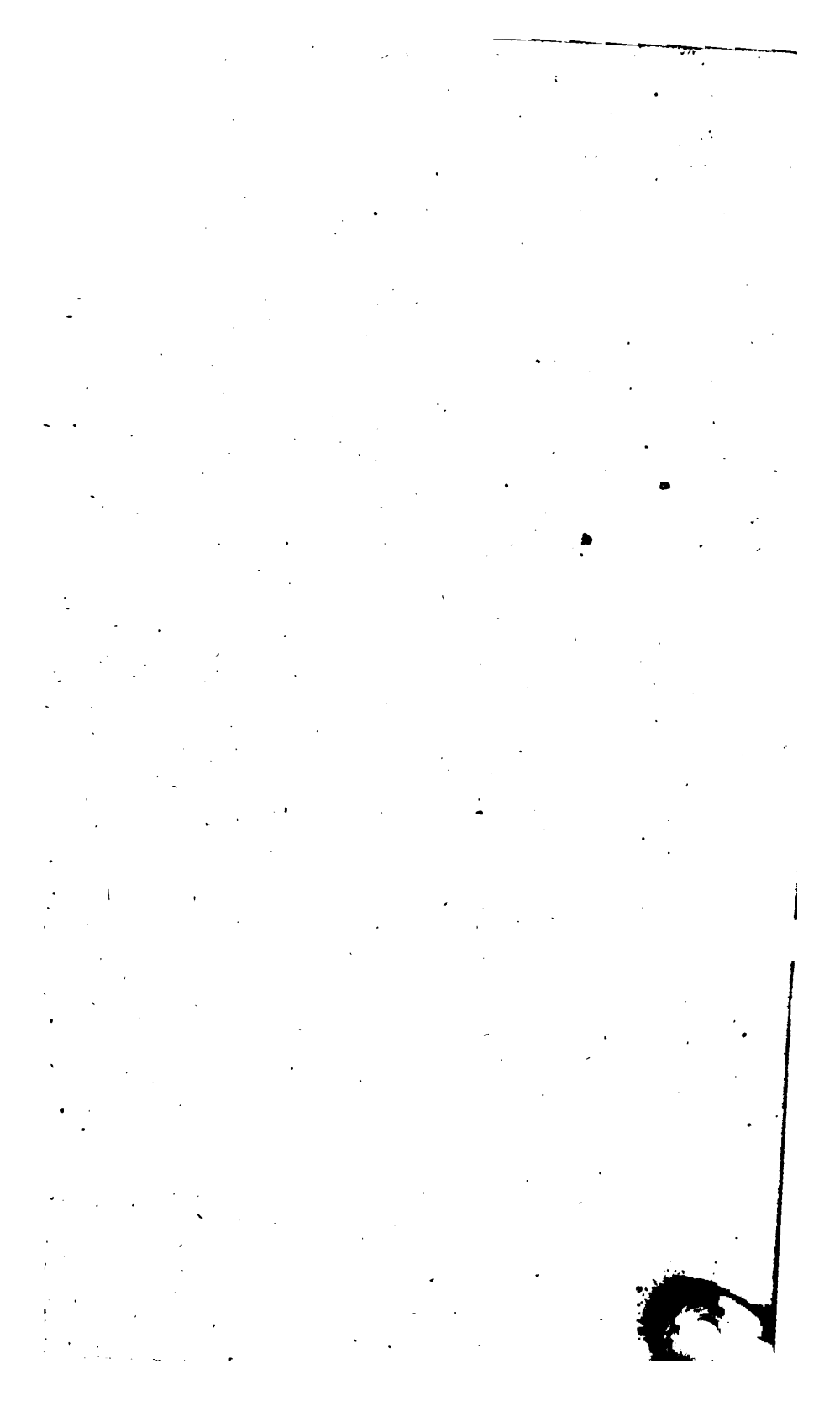
rectify this miſtake, we need only have recourſe to the original. The word ἐξουσία, which our tranſlators have rendered *a right*, does not ſignify *a legal right*, or juſt title, but only freedom and liberty to make uſe of any thing as our own, however we came by it.

But the capital argument for the plan of moral government, as they call it, and on which all the reſt depend, or any ſtrength that can be pretended in them, is taken from what the ſcriptures have inculcated over and over, viz. that in the final judgement God ſhall render unto every man according to his works, whether they have been good or bad. This is a propoſition which no man who profeſſes any regard either to ſcripture or reaſon, or even believes a judgement to come, can poſſibly make any doubt of. But if men were at pains to conſider what works are good, and what are evil, in the ſight of God; and that by works are meant, not only our outward actions, but our words, and even our thoughts, all which ſhall be brought into judgement; they would eaſily perceive what a bold adventure it muſt be to appear in the preſence of the all-knowing

ing God on this footing. The Pſalmiſt has determined it, "that no fleſh living "could be juſtified in his ſight, if he ſhould "enter into judgement with them."

But let it be obſerved, that it is no leſs an eſſential part of the divine law, that we ſhould believe in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, whom God has ſent, than that we ſhould perform any the plaineſt duties of morality; nay, ſo eſſential is it, that where this faith is not working by love, none of the commandments of God can be kept as the great Lawgiver has laid them. When men then are judged according to their works, it is not, may not be imagined, that the capital, the damning ſin, ſhould be overlooked. For this is the rule given by the Judge himſelf, "He that believeth, "and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he "that believeth not, ſhall be damned." This he has told us "is the work of "God," according to which the ſentence will paſs, "that we believe on him whom "he hath ſent," John vi. 29.; and no other works can come into conſideration, ſo as to be ſuſtained good, but ſuch as are produced by this faith; viz. the exerciſes and actings of that love to God and

man, which nothing but faith in Chriſt can produce in the heart of man in his preſent unhappy circumſtances. Accordingly we are fairly told, that in Chriſt Jeſus; that is, on the plan of the divine government as it ſtands under his adminiſtration, nothing can avail but faith, which worketh by love; and as this faith is not of ourſelves, but the free gift of God; it lands in the ſame thing with the new creature, the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Spirit, which he ſheds forth abundantly through Jeſus Chriſt the Saviour. This ſame Saviour being the judge, they muſt certainly be ſafe who have ſheltered themſelves under his care. But as for thoſe his enemies, who would not have him to reign over them, and ſcorned to be indebted to his grace, one may eaſily foreſee what they have to expect.

The End of the Firſt Volume.

The Second Volume is in the preſs, and the third will be put to preſs when the ſecond is finiſhed.